

# THE LIVING AGE:

*A Weekly Magazine of Contemporary Literature and Thought.*

(FOUNDED BY E. LITTELL IN 1844.)

SEVENTH SERIES  
VOLUME XVI.

NO. 3037. SEPT. 20, 1902.

FROM BEGINNING  
Vol. CCXXXIV.

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## MEMORIES OF MY CHILDHOOD AND SCHOOL DAYS.\*

BY EDMONDO DE AMICIS.

### I. BABYHOOD.

My very earliest personal recollection is of playing one day in a heap of sand with my little brother. He was my elder by two years, and died when I was four; and I cannot recall even in the vaguest way the look of his face. How it happens that I have kept that one picture of him and not the most shadowy memory of any of the incidents of his death which ought to have affected me so deeply,—that is one of those many mysteries of the memory which the intelligence can never explain. And I find it equally mysterious, that I should always have been perfectly certain that the little creature with whom I played that day was my brother, though I have no ground for my conviction. It seems to me that it was then that my existence began. But after this, the shadows fall once more and the light of memory only reappears after a long interval. Then I see myself, coming down the stairs at home, counting my years—which were five—on my fingers and reflecting that when I came to need both hands to tell my age, I could feel sure that I was grown up. From this time on, the events which I remember, though sep-

arated, like the mountain watch-fires of the shepherds, by wide spaces where nothing is visible, yet stand out as clearly in my mind as any more recent event of my life.

My father came from Genoa, and had charge of the government stores of salt and tobacco in one of the minor cities of Piedmont, but one which both in site and surroundings is among the most beautiful of Italy, situated on the furthest limit of a high plateau whose utmost point overlooks the confluence of a torrent and a river which encircle the town as with an embrace; and beyond whose further banks there spreads upwards like an amphitheatre a most fertile country-side all orchards and vineyards with the formidable Alps to crown the view. All my childish memories stand out from a background of the vivid green of that landscape, the bright blue of those streams, the shining snow of those lofty mountains. We lived in a roomy house, which looked out on one side over the river, and which had on its ground floor the office and store-rooms, and in front a garden, an orchard, two long vine-covered arbors, and a great courtyard. This last was filled, two days in the week, by the carts of the retail dealers, who came to lay in their stock

\* Translated for The Living Age.

from all the villages of the district, both near and far; and those days brought a movement, an atmosphere of business, a bustle of traffic into which I plunged with extreme delight, rushing about among the animals and the crowd, over the sacks and packing cases, full of curiosity and excitement, and rather puffed up by the thought that all the stir originated with my father, who seemed to me a personage endued with greater powers than any Cabinet Minister. But nothing in those early days made so deep and delightful an impression on me as did nature itself, so delightful that when I recall that time, it seems to me that never since has the sun shone with such dazzling splendor, never have the moonbeams been so limpid or the scented spring-times so fair. The keen pleasure which comes to me to-day from sunrise and sunset, rain and snow, the smell of the earth and the perfume of rose and violet is due in great measure to the memory of the sensations which all those things then aroused in me. No one could have been more fortunate than I in the surroundings of his childish years. There has always been for me sweet solace in the thought that I grew up in the sight of all that magnificent Alpine glory, in that roomy, noisy house flooded with sunlight and swept by the winds of heaven, within a stretch of garden greenery which seemed to me immense, in the midst of that bustle of arrival and departure, of excited cries and busy toil, which kept my imagination and my little legs forever on the go, and made me lead an intense and varied life, half urban and half rural, now that of a gentleman's son, now that of an office boy, but free and vigorous like the pure air I breathed.

A vivid recollection of those years, which still brings a smile to my lips, is that of the curious linguistic relation in

which I stood to my father and mother. I was not yet two when I was taken away from Oneglia, where I was born, and had begun to babble Genovese and set down in a city where they spoke a widely different dialect. The consequence was that I absolutely forgot the former but picked up the latter from the servants and my new fellow-citizens of my own age long before my parents had begun to master it, because the language which children hear from their playmates and attentive inferiors makes a keener impression on them than that to which they listen at home. So it came to pass that for a while my mother and I could hardly understand each other and there were comic scenes which set everyone laughing when she gave me a little scolding in Genovese and I defended and justified myself in Piedmontese and the dispute went on and on,—the arguments of each of us being Hebrew to the other. Often, to put an end to the matter, one of my brothers had to be summoned to serve as interpreter. So too twice a day at table where I was the only one who spoke the new dialect and did not understand the other, I seemed for a long time an absolute stranger, a foundling picked up in the new city, prevented from asking many a question, often constrained to keep silence, like those solitary travellers who find themselves seated at a *table d'hôte* where all the other guests belong to a different nation.

It was years later that I began to talk my native dialect at home. I speak it now as fluently as the other, but the Piedmontese impulse had been given first and so I have always been the most Piedmontese of my family, though, after my first youth was past, there sprang up within me and strengthened with my strength, as its familiar memories gained in force, a deep and fond affection for my native district.

In my recollections of babyhood, the post of princess by the side of the Queen my mother, is held by an old servant one of the best and kindest souls whom I have ever known. There still rises before my eyes,—each detail clear,—the little smiling face, faithful reflection of the spirit which animated it. I still hear that loving tremulous voice of which they used to say at home that it sounded like the voice of a soul in purgatory. Her name was Maddalena. To me she was a second mother, hiding my little misdeeds, rejoicing like a child in all my pleasures, distressed by every scratch I gave myself as though it were some great misfortune, she gave me wise counsel all the livelong day. In turn I loved her like a son and stood clinging to her petticoats by the hour together while she told me for the hundredth time those little stories of hers which seemed to me marvels of invention. Every night too I insisted on being lulled to sleep by her songs, whose minor wail was like that of certain Arabian melodies. I can truly say that I have been grateful to her all my life and aver that, if there be a world beyond, where we are to see again our loved ones, she will be one of those I shall be first to seek amid the white throng, and towards whom I shall dart with the most eager impetus of my wings. Strange are the freaks of memory! Because she took me one evening, along with some of the other boys to turn somersaults down a hillside towards the river where there were swarms of fireflies, her image almost always presents itself to my vision crowned with fireflies as the Madonna with stars; and because it was she who taught me to weave garlands of the red and blue flowers which grew among the corn, her face always flashes before me when I see those two colors brought together in art or in nature. And the excellent creature has preserved a place so close

to my heart-strings that when I dream of any of my heaviest sorrows even now I sometimes see her, her spindle tucked beneath her apron's band, turning on me the anxious gaze with which she used to lift me when I fell; and I hear her sweet voice speaking confused words of compassion and of comfort. Ah, were she only there indeed, when I wake from dreams like these how gladly would I lay my white head within her arms and weep out my sorrow upon the breast of my old Maddalena.

It was she—but only through ignorance, with the sole thought of amusing me—who made of me for awhile one of the most pitiable victims ever seen of the terror of ghosts. She did it by one particular story, which she told carelessly while she was spinning—How well I remember it all!—giving every now and again a glance at the pot where was cooking the soup for our supper. The story was of Death, who tells a jeering boy that he shall come that night and take him in his bed, and how the boy at night hears first the step along the street, then at the chamber door and then within, and how at last Death carries him away. This story made me fairly sick with fear. My vivid imagination led me to really hear as I lay in bed the tread of Death. I would shiver, the cold sweat would start out and a trembling seize me which made my teeth chatter. More than once I sprang from bed and rushed to my mother's room screaming for help. And from this terror of mine a hundred others took their rise. For many a day I was afraid to be alone even by daylight. I shivered at the unexpected sight of a sheet spread out in such a way that it seemed to me the spectre's cloak; I was in mortal terror of a cadaverous old man who stared at me, as I played in the courtyard, from the window of a hospital

for incurables which overlooked our house. I fancy that, had my fibre not been particularly tough, I should have had a genuine illness. So poignant in me is still the remembrance of those torments that when, in house or public garden, I see a nurse maid telling the children a story, I am disquieted and feel tempted to draw near and make sure that she is telling them nothing terrible, or, should such be the case, to beg her to desist. Poor Maddalena! she was more frightened than I by the effect of her imprudence and she brought her story-telling inexorably to an end. The duties of her position were in this way sensibly lightened, for my insatiable curiosity kept her poor brain—not that of a Dumas *père*—forever on the rack even though I was far from severe with her in the matter of repetition. "Never again! never again!" was her invariable answer to my entreaties. "May the good Lord forgive me for having been such an idiot!"

My earliest playmates were the children of one of our porters, who lived in a tiny house close alongside of the great gate of the court-yard which was also under his charge. His tribe of urchins went up in steps, like organ-pipes. They were from one to twelve years old and each year another child tumbled upon the household. For me, as the son of their employer, they were disposed to show the obsequiousness of little pages, and I was disposed to take full advantage of their inclination. But to this my father and mother were sternly opposed, never permitting me to display the slightest assumption of authority, and it is one of the things for which I am most grateful to them. They never let slip an occasion of snubbing in me any boastfulness of caste-superiority, while they instilled into me a genuine belief in equality and consideration for the poor. In every squabble which arose between me and my *po-*

*lenta*-fed playmates, if right was not doubly on my side, I was judged the guilty party. And when I had been unusually arrogant, my mother had her own peculiar method for making me see my mistake and ask pardon. She chose that moment to make the family one of her customary benefactions of linen or discarded clothing which came to those needy creatures as manna from heaven, and she used to insist on my taking her gift to them, all by myself. Together with my pleasure in performing a kindly action regret for my offence would steal upon me, and on the heels of regret would come shame. Then I would stand hesitating a while, and make many a zig-zag up and down the court-yard before presenting myself; and how great was my pleasure, when, as I handed the package to his mother, I saw my little victim smiling at me and bobbing his head from behind the door where he had taken refuge at my approach. My favorite among these children was Franceschino. Fat and fair, some two years my senior, he was a mighty hunter of snails before the Lord. He used to poke them out of the chinks of the wall, and was the inventor of a method for fulfilling the necessary formality and roasting them, by means of a match. One day in the court-yard, I was hit in the forehead by a stone which he had thrown heedlessly into the air: the blood flowed; I screamed; my mother hurried out, and a moment later appeared the porter's wife, who swooped down upon the boy like a fury, ready to pound him to a jelly. As he spun round in terror like a top, just beyond her reach, he came close by us, and my mother stopped him. I expected to see her enact the rôle of my avenger, but she put her hands upon his head and clasped him to her breast to defend him, saying to the woman, "He didn't mean to; don't strike him; he's quite forgiven." Her attitude



banished from my mind as by enchantment all resentment; even the pain of my wound seemed gone. This is what is called *training*.

Among my memories of those days stands out an angel painted in fresco on a chapel-ceiling in the cathedral where I went with my people to hear mass on Sunday,—a tall, winged figure, wrapped in a white garment, and with the sweetest of faces, whose great blue eyes seemed always looking at me. A religious sentiment was first awakened within me by this figure, which made me think how sweet it would be to dwell after death in the midst of thousands of creatures as fair and fond and white as he, seated upon a cloud, the air about me penetrated with rosy light, filled with the breath of incense and the notes of the organ. I remember I used to think of this angel every evening while I said the Lord's Prayer and the "Hail Mary!" before I went to bed and that my imagination endued with his likeness that angel guardian in whom I firmly believed for many a day, as watching, invisible, at my side from dawn to dusk. So firm was this belief of mine, that often, in my games I would pause and wonder just where and how he might then be standing, whether in front of me or behind or at my side, with wings folded or spread, and even, at times, I glanced about with a vague notion that I might catch a glimpse, if not of his very self, at least of some indication of his presence, a white something, a shadowy form, a passing gleam. I believed in those days, if what I then felt deserves the name of belief, but I do not remember that I ever felt any terror of Hell, of which I seldom thought, and then as of something with which boys had no concern. Religion was to me, as it were, a confused vision of great beauty, and an indefinite sentiment of tenderness and good-will towards everything and

everybody, down to the smallest insects, which, even in my most heedless day, I used to avoid crushing with my tread. The result of this was that when I received my first instruction in the catechism from our parish-priest, who never sugared the dose he administered, it seemed to me that the very substance of things was changed, and without any clear perception of the cause I felt disappointed as does he who, opening a book in which he has thought to read a poem, finds himself confronted by a scholastic treatise. Especially repellent to me was that bony, big-jointed sacerdotal finger uplifted, gesticulating, threatening eternal damnation. I never questioned my mother on religious matters except with reference to Paradise, about which I had the most ardent curiosity and felt sure that grown-up people must have much more precise details than little folk. And when I heard it said of anyone who had died:—"He is gone to Paradise"—I thought they said so because they had seen some sign of that person, a shadow or a flame perhaps shoot up and vanish in the azure. The thought of Paradise preoccupied my mind in those days so fully, that ever since even in my mature years, I have always been attracted and greatly delighted by those stage-settings, no matter how poorly managed, where through a rift in the clouds, behind a transparent white veil, appear on a luminous background vague celestial figures, seated in ordered ranks as in the final vision of Dante. Even the Paradise of the strolling-player's booth affords as much pleasure to me as to the youngest spectator of the puppet-show.

My guardian angel did not preserve me from an attack of croup, from which I recovered by a miracle, after the doctor had given me up. I have no recollection of my sufferings, but they must have been terrible according to

my mother's description. Already half-suffocated I lay for hours gasping and wringing my hands, like a drowning man, pushing away from me all who approached as if they were robbing me of air, and entreating by my gestures, to have the windows flung open to their furthest. All I remember is that I often listened intently to hear if the death-raven was croaking without, because Franceschino had told me that the day before my brother's death a raven had been heard croaking on our roof. I recall a momentary vision of the black form of the parish priest, standing at my bedside. And another thing, at which I shiver even now, remains in my mind. One morning when the doctor left my room, my father and mother went with him into the next chamber. The sound of lowered voices came from out it to my ears and then a terrible exclamation from my father,—"This one, too!" Terrible to me later on, that is to say, when I came to know its meaning—"This child too is taken from me",—for the doctor had just forbidden him to hope; but not terrible then because I did not understand it. And so I did not understand why my father shortly after seated himself at a little table near my bed and kept making marks with a crayon on a piece of paper and gazed attentively every little while at me. They told me afterward that he had summoned all his resolution and made a crayon likeness of me that there might be some record of my face, since there was at that time no photographer in the city. My poor father! I still have that likeness which was left me by my mother and an infinite pity seizes hold of me as I look at it and reflect with what anguish of the soul were drawn those tiny lines which seem the work of so free a hand and especially that fluff of brown curls where he fancied he was soon to press his final kiss. The crisis that ensured my safety, the joy of my parents, my

convalescence all have vanished from my mind. But I remember the first time that I was carried into the garden with a cap on my head and a handkerchief round my neck gleefully accompanied by all my people and followed by Maddalena, who was crying for very joy. I remember that it was a spring morning, and that I felt deliciously happy, as though I saw it all for the first time, when I beheld again the sunlight and the blossoming trees and the cat, who stopped and stared at me in astonishment.

Between this memory and that of my first school-days comes another, my first acquaintance with human anguish, which I would fain blot out of my mind, but which has left its scar there as a wound does in the flesh. Next to our house was the military hospital and in front of this stood a small house where lived the superintendent, a lieutenant in the infantry and his wife. The whole city was fond of this couple who seemed like brother and sister and whom I often watched from the window as they strolled along the rampart-walk, with their two beautiful children of four and six who were the admiration of everyone. One day when I came back from a walk with Maddalena we saw a great crowd gathered before the hospital among which the *bersaglieri* on guard had some difficulty in preserving order. The countenances of all were lifted to the windows of the little house, from which amid the confused hum of excited voices there came a woman's sob,—violent, broken, despairing,—with more of rage than lamentation in the sound which brought tears to the eyes of many in the crowd. Maddalena put a question to someone. The answer froze even my blood, baby though I was. What had happened was that the hospital apothecary who should have sent wormwood prescribed for a complaint of the children, had

sent instead strychnine and the two poor little things both took the powders and died almost at the same moment in the arms of their father and mother. Kind-hearted Maddalena buried her hands in her hair, burst into tears and broke into an endless iteration of "Poor people! Oh! poor people! poor people!" It was just lunch-time when we reached home and she charged me on the threshold to say

*Nuova Antologia.*

nothing to my mother who would not eat if she heard such news. But when we went in she saw my mother sitting crying with her head in her hands and realized that she already knew. Then she broke out in an exclamation of anguish and almost of anger which went to my heart though I did not yet realize that it was an echo of the eternal cry of tortured humanity, "Oh merciful God, how can such things be!"

*(To be continued.)*

## IMMORTALITY.

### II. FROM THE SCIENTIFIC STANDPOINT.

In approaching the subject of Immortality from the side of Science, we must be clear what it is we want to do, and what we may reasonably expect to do. By Immortality is meant the persistence and continuity of individual life after death. This is a matter which (unlike the existence of God) is conceivably open to scientific proof, that is to say, it turns upon a question of fact which comes, or which might come, within the province of physical experience. If one came back to us in visible form from that bourne whence (it is said) no traveller returns, broke the silence of death and spoke to us, or in some evident and physical way made known his presence among us again, that would be a fact of which Science could take cognizance, which it could examine, test and finally classify, for no unclassified phenomenon has, properly speaking, reached the scientific stage. It is well known that men of undoubted scientific ability and attainment have, among other matters, this very one under consideration and experiment. It is also well known that it presents the most enormous difficulties

to investigation, and the greatest facilities for deception and delusion. That is no reason why success should not ultimately be attained, and though in the belief of many such researches are not only doubtful and difficult, but present distinct mental and moral dangers, that again is no reason why those who regard the importance of the end in view (scientific certainty one way or the other) as outweighing all other considerations, should not, so long as they maintain the cool and dispassionate attitude of mind which should be characteristic of all scientific enquiry, continue their investigations.

The course of these and the results so far attained are open to all who choose to study the publications of the Society for Psychical Research, and the present essay is not intended for their reproduction. Its aim is different. Apart from these investigations there is generally thought to be justification for what may be called a scientific presumption against the persistence of individual life after death, and if this be the case, a greater weight of evidence is rightly demanded than would other-

wise be necessary before it can be accepted as proved. Our object will be to enquire whether such justification does in fact exist.

In the first place it will be well to call to mind with what aspect of the universe and of man Science deals, so that we may see how far she has the right and power of interpretation. She does not occupy herself with the physical alone. The phenomena of mind as well as body fall within her ken; "Mental Physiology" and "Psychological Physics," as well as pure Psychology, are important and well-recognized branches of her domain, and have advanced at least as much as those of older date. Facts, whether psychical or physical, are material for Science; her aim is to reduce their apparent chaos to order, to discover and establish on a firm basis their relationships and sequences, and the conditions under which they are produced, to simplify as far as possible the expression of these relationships, sequences and conditions, making the necessary formulæ as few and as comprehensive as possible,—finally to be prepared at all points for the discovery of fresh facts, discarding any theory with which they are in evident disagreement. There is, however, one essential requisite for the work of Science. It is that the facts which are her raw material shall be located in space and time. If there be such things as facts or experiences which are non-temporal and non-spatial, with these Science in the ordinary acceptance of the term cannot deal. Clearly, therefore, any purely scientific interpretation of the universe or of man must be given in terms of space and time. Science has no vocabulary to transcend them. She cannot say that they are not transcendable or transcended; but she cannot herself pass beyond their bounds. We must endeavor to see what precisely this limitation involves.

Perhaps it may be most forcibly presented by the statement that the Scientific outlook is confined to the external aspect and significance of the universe, to the *body* of experience as we may say. Its soul, its inner meaning, eludes the methods by which Science works, because these are only applicable where space and time are applicable. Consequently no scientific explanation or interpretation can be more than partially satisfactory. There is always a residuum left unaccounted for, and that residuum contains the "why" of all the "hows" that with infinite pains and toil Science has accumulated and co-ordinated. The existence of this residuum can be ignored or held of no account by any who are content to regard the universe as meaningless, but those who are sure that it has a meaning, still more those who hope that the meaning may be discoverable, are fain to seek some method of interpretation which does not pre-suppose space and time. Hence arises the need for philosophy. Philosophy endeavors to go behind the postulates which Science perforce accepts unquestioningly, and to examine their credentials. It is not proposed to enter upon any such formidable task here. Our present concern is not with Philosophy but with Science, whose real value and importance are only appreciated when her limitations are recognized. She teaches us the course of things, not the reason of their being; she exhibits them in their relation to time and space and to the intellect of man, not in their relation to their ground and source, whatever that may be. Consequently she cannot reveal the secret or the meaning of their existence. Yet let none despise or underrate the work which is hers and which, though misleading, if supposed to comprise the whole range of knowledge, is essential to its truth and validity. We can have no reliable metaphysics unless we have first made sure of our physics. In

other words, without a faithful representation of the body of experience we cannot hope to penetrate to that inner significance which we have ventured to call its soul.

So much being premised, let us turn our attention to the teaching of Science with regard to man, remembering that in his case, as in the case of the whole order of which he forms part, she is and can be presenting only one and that the outer aspect of his being.

The first and most important consideration which presents itself is the demonstrated continuity of human life with the organic universe and with itself under very varying phases of existence. For our present purpose we may leave on one side the first half of this thesis, taking it as proved that man as we know him has—as a race—ascended from and through lower types of life to his present position as the crown and cope of the known organic world. We are concerned more immediately with his individual aspect, and this we will proceed to consider in some detail.

Each human individual commences life as a single organic cell, not yet so far differentiated as to present distinctive animal characteristics. The cell undergoes a complicated process of subdivision, multiplies, the daughter cells behave in like manner, their aggregate taking to itself a more and more specialized form until first the vertebrate and then the human embryo comes into existence. The latter grows, its sex becomes apparent, its various organs commence their functions. At the end of a certain time it is ready to be born into the external world as a fully-formed human infant. Through all these prenatal changes and transmutations the individual life has been continuous, the cell is not the embryo, the embryo is not the infant but the life of the infant is one with the life of the embryo and the cell.

After birth further development is undergone. The infant grows, he shows signs of consciousness, then of self-consciousness, he gains the use and control of his limbs, he begins to understand something of himself and his relationship to his environment, he becomes capable of sympathy, love, friendship, his bodily and mental powers increase, finally through childhood, boyhood and youth, he passes to the stage of fully developed manhood. And through all these changes, as through those that preceded birth, the individual life is continuous. The man differs from the youth, the youth from the boy, the boy from the child, the child from the infant, but the life of the man is the same life that was in the infant. More than this he identifies it as such. Since the first dawning of memory he knows that he has been the same. "It is I myself and not another who have passed through these transmutations. I was that child, that boy, that youth—I who am now the grown man." Nor do the changes cease here. The man has all his experience to accumulate, and as the saying goes this process makes a "different man" of him. He is different at 40 from 30, at 70 from 50,—different, for as he constantly asserts, "*I was* so-and-so, and so-and-so, now *I am* something else;" yet the same, for the difference does not consist in another individual having come into existence, but in one individual having passed through a continuous series of developments. •

This fact of self-identity through difference is so entirely familiar, so completely a part (or rather the ground) of every-day experience, that the plain man simply takes it for granted, guides his actions in accordance with it, and seldom realizes that there is anything peculiar or requiring explanation about it. Let us for the moment accept this point of view, and turn our attention to another less immediately obvious



truth which a study of modern science brings very prominently to our notice. This is the increase of individuality apparent as we rise in the scale of organic life. It has already been observed that in the earliest stage of the human embryo, the future man is not even so far differentiated as to be distinctively animal. This fact is reproduced on a larger scale. All students of biology are familiar with those lowly and curious organisms which throughout their life-history retain both animal and vegetable characteristics, so that it is impossible to classify them correctly in either of the great divisions of the organic world. In higher organisms we no longer find this confusion existing, save in the earliest stages of their life-history. The adult forms leave no doubt as to the division in which we must place them; and as organic complexity increases, so does the oneness and distinctness of the individual life to which it ministers. Taking for convenience and brevity's sake illustrations from the animal kingdom alone, compare the individuality of an oyster with that of an ant or a bee, that of a bee with that of one of the higher vertebrates, a dog or an ape, that of an ape with that of a man. Individuality, it must be remarked, has a double aspect, the outward and the inward, the outward being that by which an observer distinguishes one individual from others of the same kind, the inward by which each individual distinguishes and identifies himself. Taking man (as we perforce must do) as our standard observer, we may notice that his difficulty in distinguishing one individual (of the same species) from another decreases in direct proportion with the degree of organic complexity attained. He would be sore put to it to identify an oyster, he would have little difficulty in identifying a dog or a horse; and it needs no argument to show that the oyster is almost if not totally deficient

in that sense of self-identity which is the inner aspect of individuality, and which is possessed to a distinct extent by the higher animals and to an incomparably higher degree by man. The inner and the outer aspects develop together; and man, who possesses both in the highest known degree, is the most individual being with whom Science has to deal. That constitutes the great difficulty of Science with regard to him. For despite her attention to details, and her accumulation of minute separate facts, she is very highly abstract in her aims. She descends to particulars only to attain generalization. Her great end is classification, her search is for types, and too persistent and assertive an individuality is her bane. She cannot away with it. Yet after all the type exists quite as much for the individuals as the individuals for the type, and forgetfulness of this fact has caused a one-sidedness in scientific interpretations of man which need not have been incurred.

Even had this error been avoided, however, Science could never give a complete account of man, and that because she cannot view his individuality from within. None but the man himself can do that. Psychology classifies his mental conditions, feelings, activities, emotions, but that very fact precludes any but an external understanding of him. From the internal point of view he cannot be classified: he is unique. When all his mental experiences have been placed under their appropriate heads, perception, ideation, intellection, and the rest, he himself is conscious that the central point has never been touched, that all this even when he has studied it in himself is knowledge *about* him, but not knowledge *of* him. That is still a closed door to which Science does not possess the "Open, sesame." It was perhaps inevitable, though infinitely to be regretted, that this being the case there

should have been attempts to interpret man upon the important but evidently incomplete data that Science could accumulate, and judgment was pronounced from the outside point of view, the result being that man was declared to be nothing but a bundle of impressions—a stream of consciousness which somehow or other (it never could be clearly stated how) wove themselves into temporary unity and evolved that illusory but very convenient notion of self-identity. Baldly stated, this doctrine, which Hume initiated and which has commended itself to various leaders of modern scientific thought, notably to Huxley, appears so difficult of comprehension, and when grasped so innately absurd, that the plain man may be safely trusted to discard it. Impressions without a something impressed, a stream of consciousness self-deluded into the recognition of a one and undivided non-existent self, appear to the ordinary mind sheer absurdities.

The difficulty of understanding, and the impossibility of classifying individual man have played their part in helping to turn aside thought from looking upon him as of any great importance in solving historical, social and anthropological problems. It is much easier to study him in classes and masses, communities, nations and races. Psychology itself is occupied with generic rather than individual man. It is difficult to see how it could be otherwise, for even in that analysis of consciousness which is one of the principal psychological methods, it is still always man as object who is under observation, i.e., man as he can be known, not as he knows. This last knowledge is—in the sense in which we are now taking it—only possible to each individual man for himself, and even by him not classifiable, intuitive not reasoned. Self knowledge is impenetrable from without, incommunicable, in each case

unique, consequently outside the range of Science, for whom the unique is inadmissible. This being the case it is no matter for surprise that she should assume for her own purposes that man as she knows him, social, psychological man, is man complete, and treat that inner individual aspect which for ever eludes her as of little or no moment. For her own purposes she is justified in doing this, so long as she does not endeavor to impose her point of view as sufficient and satisfactory beyond her own sphere.

To attempt this would be to ignore what Science is pledged never to ignore, a great natural fact, to the recognition of which, as we have seen, all those biological processes which are one of her especial and most successful studies lead up. The increasing stress laid upon individuality, as we rise in the scale of organic life, denotes that in the economy of Nature the individual, however partially understood, is of great and peculiar importance. It is customary to say that Nature ignores the individual, that she cares only for the good of the species, the improved type, and that to secure her end, holocausts of individuals are offered up. Tennyson saw farther than this:—

So careful of the type? But no!  
From scarpèd cliff and quarried stone  
She cries, "A thousand types are gone,  
I care for nothing, all shall go."

But "all" does not go; there remains from stage to stage an election, an election among the "types," an election among the individuals that conform to the types. The "fittest" survive, and when that abstraction the "species" is brought down to concrete life, the "fittest," the inheritors at any given moment of all the treasures of evolution so far accumulated, are a certain number of *individuals*. It would therefore be quite as true, and often less mislead-

ing, to say that individuals rather than "types" are the special care of Nature.

There is, however, one fact undeniable till we come to man, viz., that the *raison d'être* of each individual existence apparently ceases at death. It seems to have no further possibilities but to have been exhausted by the demand made upon it in this visible course of things. Taking even the highest animals below man, this statement, where their life follows a normal course, is obviously true. With man, as we have seen, the case is different. So far from actual conditions exhausting his individuality, they rather seem insufficient to rouse its highest powers, or exhibit its full scope. His conscious demand for himself and his fellows is more time, fewer physical disabilities and mental limitations, a wider sphere, a fuller experience, a larger life. And making ample allowance for the truth which Weismann has so prominently brought forward, that as things are, the short duration of life among the higher animals is racially good because the function of reproduction is thus reserved to those fittest to exercise it, and a more vigorous vitality passed on to the succeeding generations, we cannot but recognize that in the case of man this benefit is conferred at the cost of an individual loss large out of all proportion to that incurred at any lower stage in the organic world. The possibilities of no human individual are exhausted at death, and the more highly trained, cultured, and intellectually or practically active his life has been, the more do we perceive that his capacity has been greater than his attainment. This fact is certainly no *proof* that his individual life does not terminate at death; but assuming (as in a future essay the

writer hopes to show we have a right to assume) a scale of values in Nature, and recognizing that if such a scale exists a premium is placed upon individuality, a *presumption* which we may justly call scientific is afforded that the individual man does not cease at death. If this be so, the result, so far as Science is concerned, upon the question of Immortality, would be the same as that in other cases of a scientific presumption. The suggestion would be accepted as a working hypothesis which a further accumulation and study of facts would either disprove or raise to the rank of an accepted theory.

Let us assume for the sake of argument merely that the latter alternative has occurred.<sup>1</sup> What would then be the position of Science with regard to the persistence of individual life after death? She would accept the fact as she accepts the fact of life after birth. She would note and classify the phenomena upon which her conviction is based. She would incidentally urge that conduct should be such as to subserve the interests (so far as from her point of view she is able to infer them) of life beyond as well as of life before death. She would encourage research into that as into any other unknown, or partially known, region of investigation. She would endeavor to ascertain, if possible to produce experimentally, the conditions of such life, and in case of success we should doubtless have a body of scientific men devoted to this special study and with continually improving methods of pursuing it. How far this might be an advantage to mankind at large it is difficult to determine, but one thing is certain, the inner significance of individual human life would be as far from the ken of Science as ever. She would indeed be

<sup>1</sup> In the opinion of some it has occurred already; but scientific men as a body have certainly not yet reached so far as the working hypothesis stage, and in the opinion of the pres-

ent writer never will, while they retain the presumption against the possibility of individual survival after death.

able to assert with even more confidence than she now too often denies its persistence after death, and this might produce a sobering and awe-inspiring effect on the thoughtful, but her material would still be the body, not the soul, of experience, and in presenting this new class of facts she would be as unable to give a complete and satisfying interpretation of them as she is of the facts pertaining to the life of man as she at present recognizes it.

These remarks are made in no carping or fault-finding spirit, but to correct what seems to the writer a double misconception, viz., (1) that Science is justified in a presumption against the persistence of individual human life after death; and (2) that were the contrary proved she would be in a position to give an entirely different interpretation of that life as a whole. The considerations which have occupied us in the present essay show, on the contrary, that the true scientific presumption is rather for than against the persistence of individual life after death, and that in any case it is not within the province of Science to attempt a complete interpretation of the life of man, whether or not it persists after death in individual form. In this second statement we are only asserting that in the region of Knowledge, as in that of practical life, there is a division of labor, that though Science can do much, she cannot do all, and that her efforts need to be supplemented by work of another kind, to which her own is indispensable but which it cannot supply.

The presence—we might say the omnipresence—of individuality, not only in the organic world but in the known universe, might be illustrated in many ways. Man is only an extreme instance of that which is foreshadowed with ever-increasing clearness as his own status in the Natural Order is approached. That Order itself in its

entirety bears the impress of individuality. It is not one of a class, it is unique. It is this—and not that. Each event occurs because the universe is what it is and not something else, and so complete is its individuality (technically called the Uniformity of Nature) that even its possibilities—the things which may be or may not be—are limited to the kind of things which are in consonance with its characteristics as a whole.

One fundamental characteristic is the persistence of the same thing through manifold changes of form. What is known in physics as the Conservation of Energy is an illustration of this on a large scale. The technical definition of Energy is capacity for work, and by its conservation is meant that in the transmutations which this capacity undergoes, being now potential, now kinetic, appearing at one moment as mechanical motion, at another as heat, its sum remains the same. No "Energy"—science tells us—is ever lost. Yet this assertion needs to be qualified by another, viz., that in every transmutation some energy is "dissipated," i.e., the exact equivalent does not reappear in usable form. It escapes, and though still in existence is, for practical purposes, whether these be cosmical processes or the ends of applied Science, wasted. The scientific significance of this fact is that the course of things, as we know it, must come to an end in time. The time may be (though so far as the solar system is concerned it appears possibly predicable within some millions of years) immeasurable, but none the less it has a term; and when that term is reached the condition of the known universe will be what is best described as that of death. Its whole available energy will by then be degraded into heat of a low and absolutely uniform temperature, and the result will be absence of light, warmth and life. It should be remarked, how-

ever, that the shell—if we may so call it—of the cosmos will apparently remain. Science does not seem able to predict what will become of the agglomerations of matter known to us as Stellar Systems. Apparently the law of gravitation will continue to hold, and dead worlds will revolve round dark suns in hopeless and impenetrable mystery. The death of the universe, if such be a true representation of it, is thus infinitely more desolate and unlovely than the death of organic forms. These at any rate by returning to their elements minister to the continuance and furtherance of life and beauty. Though they themselves perish, their dissolution is instinct with promise and service,—but the dead Cosmos, so far as Science can speak, is devoid of promise and serves nothing. Perhaps this very fact, opposed as it is to all analogy with known cosmical processes during the ages of their duration, may point to the inference that scientific data are here insufficient for prediction, and that there may be, even from her own point of view, possibilities in the decay of the universe which she is not as yet in a position to suggest. However this may be, it is more important for our purpose that we should return to our consideration of the persistence of individual life through organic and super-organic changes.

A favorite analogy with those who believe in the persistence of human individuality after death has been the life-history of insects, the metamorphoses they undergo strikingly exhibiting the possibility of the same individual passing into totally different conditions of life, yet retaining its identity. This is an obvious and a picturesque illustration, but it is not in reality so striking as that which has already been drawn from the life-history of the higher

animals. The changes there exhibited are apparently more gradual; but they are as great, indeed greater than in the case of insects. There is more difference between the ovum of a vertebrate animal, and the adult form of that animal, than there is for instance between the chrysalis and the butterfly. In one respect, however, the latter analogy offers a suggestion which is not found in the case of the higher vertebrates, though in that of reptiles it to some extent exists.<sup>2</sup> The fully-formed butterfly emerges from the chrysalis case and leaves the latter behind to be resolved into its elements, having no use for it in the new and higher phase of life which has begun. Assuming that the human individual enters at death into new conditions of life, this analogy may assist us to understand that he need not be thought of as bodiless, because the body which sufficed to his needs under the old conditions has been left to return to its elements and be transmuted through natural processes into other forms to subserve other uses. If we may so express it, it is not the body, but the body-building power possessed by all organisms, which is the important matter. Part of the individuality of all living beings consists in the unique way in which in every case the body-building power exhibits itself. In the same organic division the body is always built on the same plan, yet no two individuals have bodies which are identically the same. Even in the case of twins this is true. The difference lies in some subtle individual idiosyncrasy in the body-building power, which so far Science is unable to penetrate. The individuality of the body becomes far more evident, however, as we rise in the organic scale, and is most evident in man. In him too for the first time the body-building power

<sup>2</sup> The reference of course is to the periodical casting of the skin, but the analogy is not so close or so striking as in the case of insects,

which enter into actually new conditions of life. Reptiles remain in the same.



seems to fail in providing adequate expression for the being to which it is linked. The man is more, is capable of more, than owing to his physical limitations he is able to make clear to himself or to others. It is for this reason that we feel impelled to speak of them as limitations. The body of a bird or of any animal does not strike us as limiting its individuality, rather as expressing it in a most complete and appropriate manner. The individuality of many a human being, on the contrary, seems to be fighting its way to expression through bodily hindrances, rather than clothing itself in a suitable and controllable form.

It would be unwise to lay too much stress on such considerations as the above, yet they are worthy of notice. They are among the facts which it should be the part of Science to note and classify; the part of Philosophy and Religion to interpret. In the present essay our concern is with the scientific aspect of the subject alone, and enough has perhaps been said to show that individuality is one of the most salient characteristics of the universe, that it assumes a special importance in the organic region of that universe, and in man is incomparably stronger, fuller, and at the same time less adequately expressed than in that of any other living being. Consequently the possibility in his case of its continuance after death deserves to be seriously confronted.

To do this we must have recourse to philosophical considerations, considerations that is, which, while accepting all the conclusions of Science within her own province, that of Space and Time, decline to regard them as final, but seek to penetrate the inner significance of facts of which Science can only give an external interpretation.

From the scientific standpoint, then, all we can claim (apart from those facts adverted to at the commencement

of this essay, the reality of which is still under test and discussion) is a presumption in favor of the persistence of human individual life after death, a presumption founded on the prominent place of individuality in Nature, and its presence in so high a degree in man that actual conditions are insufficient to give it scope.

One word may perhaps be added with reference to those alleged occurrences which if substantiated would, it is thought, place individual immortality beyond the pale of scientific doubt. If any reader will be at the pains to seriously question his personal friends and acquaintances, accepting only first-hand evidence, he will be surprised to find how numerous are the instances of *unsought* but apparently indubitable reappearances of, or communications from those who have died to those who are living. They are seldom spoken of for two reasons, (1) that such experiences are usually held too sacred by their subjects to be freely communicated to others, and (2) that there exists so great a prejudice against their reality that sensible and healthy-minded persons (and the evidence of no others in these matters could be accepted) shrink from laying themselves open to the almost certain accusation of an over-excitability of imagination, a morbid mental or physical condition and the like. Consequently many occurrences which at first sight might, as it seems, be exceedingly important from the scientific point of view, are either never mentioned at all, or are kept back till owing to the length of time which has elapsed, and perhaps the death of the chief person concerned, they become unverifiable. This would be more regrettable than it is, were it not for the fact that save to this person, the one to whom the communication is made, it can never approve itself as reliable in the present state of scientific opinion. Experiences of the kind which the

writer has in view are, if real and unsought, so absolutely impossible to reproduce and so personal in their character and import, that though to their subject they may be absolutely convincing, and to those whose personal knowledge of him places his trustworthiness beyond doubt highly interesting and suggestive, they, like some other individual experiences, are not matter for scientific investigation. The occurrences which do so lend themselves either are or tend to be reproducible under known conditions. Consequently though as a rule they are infinitely more trivial in nature than the unsought experiences referred to, they are more valuable scientifically and more calculated to overcome prejudice.

But the true natural scale of values is not always the same as that of Science, and in another region of knowledge, which it will be our object to

explore on a future occasion, it may appear that those strictly individual manifestations have a worth and significance not to be ignored and despised. In the meanwhile we may close with the remark that save to the wilfully ignorant or prejudiced the existence of telepathy, that is communication between human beings under present known conditions, without any traceable physical intervention, is an established fact. Assuming that human beings exist under other and unknown conditions, telepathy offers a means of communication with those living the present visible life which it would be almost impossible to suppose would never be used; and this is a reflection full of pregnant suggestion to those who do not regard the known as co-extensive with the existing universe.

Emma Marie Caillard.

The Contemporary Review.

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### ANTON TCHEKHOFF.

English criticism is at present very much occupied with the remarkable writings of Maxim Gorki. The longest, but by no means the best, of his stories, *Foma Gordeyeff*, has already gone into several editions; and Western critics have tumbled over one another in their eagerness to acclaim its author as "the rising star on the Russian literary horizon." There is a general feeling that the orb of Tolstoy's genius, which, after dominating Europe for nearly fifty years, is now apparently setting forever, will leave behind it a great void upon the literary firmament; and, as criticism abhors a vacuum, regarding the succession of genius as an essential principle, it has been obliged in its own interests to find someone to carry on the great Russian literary tradition of

vigor, freshness and truth. But the transmission of this great inheritance into the young hands of Maxim Gorki seems a premature step. It is not the purpose of the writer to say anything about Gorki, his astonishing writings, and his still more astonishing life. The reference is made merely with the object of calling attention to a strange breach in the continuity of our knowledge of living Russian writers; and to show how in our haste to acclaim the rising of a new star we pass over a rival luminary of greater magnitude—a writer still living and still young whose achievements in literature are to-day creating a greater clamor of mingled rapture and repulsion than even *Tchekash* and *Konovloff*. That man is Anton Pavlovitch Tchekhoff.

That Tchekhoff's writings are entirely unknown in England is merely another way of saying that criticism, the least catholic of sciences, honors those works which lend themselves best to interpretation in its own tongue rather than those which are most highly honored in the country of their origin. Russian literature, as it appears in the diminished richness of a foreign language, is the best instance of this. Only three Russian prose-writers, Dostoyeffsky, Turgenieff, and Tolstoy have attained anything like celebrity in England. Yet Russian critics agree that there is nothing in the works of any of these three which surpasses in grace and genius the best work of Nikolai Gogol, the fiftieth anniversary of whose death is now being celebrated in Russia. But Gogol is quite unknown to English readers. The critic and the translator now make a skip from Tolstoy to Gorki; and leave unbridged the gulf which represents a generation in age and more than a generation in ideas. Apparently a literary era ends with the Tolstoyan dogma—the negation of force, the apotheosis of the omnipotent conscience; and a new era begins with the Nietzsche in a state of nature who calls himself "Gorki," with his strangled conscience, and his deification of force and fraud as the arbiters of justice and the meshes of fate. The antithesis though obvious is illusive, for an intermediate force exists; and it is against this, and not against the neo-Christianity of Tolstoy, that Gorki has risen in revolt. This force is represented by Anton Tchekhoff, the painter of the banal life, the analyst of the *Illusions Perdues* of an effete society, and the prophet of the folly of revolt against the overpowering baseness and the triviality of a soulless world.

There are very good reasons why the celebrity of Tchekhoff as the painter of this colorless life has been so little

heard of outside his own country. The career of his rival, Gorki, is a romance more entrancing than anything he has written. His hideous childhood, his ferocious struggles with poverty and hunger, his self-education, and his meteoric apparition in the Eastern sky, are alone sufficient to draw the gaze of a world ever on the lookout for sensation. Gorki's stories, too, are obvious in motive, built on heroic lines, and daubed with the excessive coloring of the pavement artist. The sharp contrast to this which is afforded both by Tchekhoff's life and Tchekhoff's writings, easily explains his relative obscurity abroad. Born in 1860, the descendant of a serf, a poor student at Moscow University, and a consumptive doctor, there is nothing remarkable in his career. By origin belonging to the poorest class of Russian society, his education and profession passed him at once into that middle-class medium, the portrayer of whose follies and vices he was destined to become. Tchekhoff did not burst upon the Russian literary world full-fledged as did Gorki three years ago. His earliest publications took the form of short stories and trivial sketches in the humorous papers *Strekoz* and *Oskolki*, and *feuilletons* in the *Novoe Vremya* and the *St. Petersburg Gazette*. He became known first merely as a humorist gifted with exceptional talent for devising amusing complications, and a weakness for making his characters despicable as well as ludicrous. But he rapidly fell under the influence of that intellectual indifference which has reigned in Russia since the decline of the reforming enthusiasms born of the Emancipation. The abandonment of all hope of political regeneration, the restriction of civic effort, and the closing of all careers for individual initiative had reduced Russian life to a hopeless chaos of stagnation from which even the joy of expectancy had flown. In these conditions,

with everything salient suppressed, the pettiness of everyday life was bound to assume abnormal proportions. It was Tchekhoff's fortune to seize upon this material. The torpid immobility of the country, the trivial fever of the towns, the meanness of a life without ardor or ideal became his subjects; and from the first he enlightened them in the light of a philosophy which is not disillusioned only because it has never known illusion. Both by the range of his subjects, and the method of his treatment, he became essentially the painter of the unprofitable life.

Tchekhoff's earlier stories are extremely short—some of them could be printed upon a single page of this Review—they gave no scope, therefore, for his peculiar descriptive skill and analytical talent. But his first sustained effort, *The Steppe*,<sup>1</sup> published serially in the now-extinct *Sievernii Vestnik*, was sufficient to convince Russian critics that a young eagle had arisen in their midst. *The Steppe*, though written at an early age, is not only one of the best of Tchekhoff's studies, but it affords a parable of the characteristics of his genius. In form it is nothing more than a series of descriptive panels depicting the drive of four utterly uninteresting individuals through an utterly uninteresting landscape. *The Steppe* in Tchekhoff's own words, is, "a country so monotonous, so empty of change that as you proceed on your journey you are forever fancying that you have turned the horse's heads, and are driving home across the country just passed through." On this monotonous background Tchekhoff set an extraordinary mosaic of colors and forms. As the battered, springless *britchka* speeds along the dusty track, the interminable steppe flashes past in a succession of glowing lights. The cloudless sky, the blazing sun, the exhalations from the

soil, the incense from a million flowers, the droning of insects and tumult of rooks by day, the song of the nightingale by night, the hundred indefinable impressions of an endless journey, are sketched with unerring skill. The uninteresting mortals, whose rapid drive forms the mechanism of this magic panorama—Deniska, the coachman, Father Christopher with his classic Latinity, and little Yegorushka, who, being dragged to school against his will, dreams of being spirited back to his mother on the knee of a beautiful countess, and awakes disenchanted with a hard piece of gingerbread sticking in his side—become as vivid and *spirituel* as the steppe itself.

When from painting nature, and writing genial little tragi-comedies for the humorous press, he turned to that analysis of character and motive on which his reputation is founded, Tchekhoff remembered the lesson of the steppe. As he had taken for his theme the least varied of all landscapes, and transfigured its apparent emptiness in a panorama of glowing colors and varying shapes, so he chose in the human world the most unpromising of materials; and achieved his triumph in the illumination of everything that in human nature is most trivial, insignificant and base. The peculiarity of Tchekhoff's talent is that while he has created a whole procession of living characters, who speak a living tongue and act like living beings, there is hardly to be found among them a single honorable, intelligent, and good-hearted man or woman. Stupidity is their commonest attribute; those who are not stupid are feeble and morbid; those who are merely wicked are always aimlessly so; and nearly all are given to gross habits and banal sentiments which produce in the reader a feeling of choking disgust. But arid alike in their vices and virtues, they are always interesting and lifelike.

<sup>1</sup> "Razkazul." Twelfth edition. St. Petersburg. 1898.

Tchekhoff's pessimism, however, does not stop with this; he paints occasional types of moral excellence and spiritual elevation whose purpose it is to make visible, by contrast, the baseness by which they are surrounded. But while he is far too much of an artist to exclude these redeeming elements, he is too much of a pessimist to admit their predominance or success. These people are therefore the failures of life, whose end is suicide or lunacy.

This is the motive of *Ward No. 6*,<sup>3</sup> which is regarded by many Russians as the best of Tchekhoff's novels. *Ward No. 6* is the lunatic asylum in a squalid, remote, and stagnant country town. It is a microcosm of the town itself, a pandemonium of brutality, corruption, and neglect. The patients are robbed and bullied by the master, the matron, and the nurses; the doctor sells the hospital stores to fill his own pockets; and Cerberus Nikita, the porter, preserves order by thrashing the inmates into insensibility. "Its windows are guarded with iron bars, its floor is damp and splintered; there is a smell of sour cabbage, a smell of unsnuffed wicks, a smell of bugs and ammonia, and when you enter the room this combination of smells produces upon you the impression that you have entered a den of wild beasts." The first six chapters of the book are devoted to a description of the past history of the inmates; and when you have read the subsequent chapters, it dawns upon you that the introduction was written merely to enforce the lesson that men of genius and virtue invariably end in padded cells, while sots and ruffians triumph outside. For while there are several men of respectable antecedents inside the asylum, there is only one who can be called respectable outside. And it is his destiny also to end within it.

This is the new doctor, Andrei Yefimitch Ragin, a cultivated, honest, and humane man. Ragin is at first inspired by the genuine zeal of the reformer; he detests the abuses which he sees around him, and determines to sweep them away. But while his intentions are admirable, he is totally lacking in the resolute will of the successful reformer. His character is such that he cannot even control his own household. When he feels hungry, instead of ordering his dinner, he coughs irresolutely and says "I was thinking of dining," or "suppose I were to have a cup of tea." When the superintendent of the asylum brings him accounts, which he knows to have been falsified, he reddens, signs them, and feels himself more guilty than the transgressor. His hopeless feebleness of will wrecks all his efforts at reform; weary of the struggle he, in the end, neglects his work, and spends his days at home poring over books. Among the callous, stupid and illiterate townspeople, he has only one friend, Mikhail Averyanitch, a good-humored ex-cavalry officer, who borrows his friend's money and cheers him with ponderous witticisms and pointless anecdotes of military life. Ragin soon loses all his private practice, and drifts rapidly into a transcendental state of indifference to distinctions which, he deludes himself, justifies the neglect of his duties. "It is true," he argues, "that Nikifor beats the patients with his fists, and that the mad Jew Moseika begs in the street and gives the money to the porter. But after all, in essentials, there is no difference between my asylum and the best hospital in Vienna." At last a new light breaks in upon his life. On one of his rare visits to the asylum he gets into conversation with a patient, Ivan Dmitritch Gromof, who has been imprisoned as a madman since his early youth. Ragin soon discovers that Gromof is an intelligent and cultivated

<sup>3</sup> "Palata No Shestol." Sixth edition. St. Petersburg. 1898.



man, who, because he was honest, good-hearted, and laborious, went through a series of indescribable misfortunes, which drove him out of his mind. "I have lived in this town twenty years," he says, "but this man is the first I have met who was worth talking to." Gromof is, as a rule, perfectly lucid. He talks philosophy with the doctor, combats his transcendentalism, and tells him that his indifference to others' suffering springs from the fact that he has never known suffering himself. "You despise pain," he says, "but squeeze your finger in the door, and you will howl for your life."

Ragin now gives up all his books and his speculations, and for hours at a time sits on the lunatic's bed and learns true wisdom. The townspeople, who have always suspected the sanity of a man who has never been seen gambling or intoxicated, look at him strangely when he passes down the street. The nurses whisper together when he enters the ward; the superintendent's children, whom he was wont to pat on the head, run away, and his only sane friend, Mikhail Averyanitch, advises him to give up vodka, and tells consolatory stories of companions in arms who, though at the point of death, yet recovered as the result of abstinence. The crisis comes when Ragin is summoned to the Town Hall to meet all the local authorities, and a doctor from a neighboring town. For half an hour the party discuss business and gossip about their private affairs, and then the strange doctor asks Ragin what is the day of the month, how many days there are in the year, and whether it is true that in Ward No. 6 there is a remarkable prophet. "It is time, old man, for you to take a rest," says a friend. Only then does Ragin understand. He loses his position, travels for change to Warsaw in company of Mikhail Averyanitch, who borrows his money, and drives him nearly to the

point of real insanity with his ponderous wit. When he returns he attempts to lead his old life. But the townspeople persist in regarding him as a harmless lunatic. His successor, Khobotoff, pays him daily visits, and doses him with bromide of potassium and rhubarb pills; and Mikhail Averyanitch looks at him pityingly and tries to cheer him up with barrack-room jokes. At last, driven desperate by their importunities, he drives both from the house. That seals his doom. He is now, they argue, a dangerous lunatic, and must be got into the asylum by force or fraud. The same evening Khobotoff returns, pretends to treat Ragin as a sane man, and invites him to visit the Ward for a pretended consultation. Ragin consents; the asylum door shuts behind him, and Nikita marches forward with a dressing-gown and slippers, and shows the doctor his bed. Overcome by his misfortunes Ragin has not the courage even to protest. "I am glad! You drank other men's blood; now they will drink yours," screams Gromof in a paroxysm of madness. "Give me a kopeck," cries Moseika. After a short imprisonment Ragin joins his companions in a revolt. But Nikita is used to revolts. He bangs his fists on his old master's head. Next day Ragin dies.

*Ward No. 6* is not only one of the best of Tchekhoff's stories for the pictures it gives of Russian provincial life, but it expresses more comprehensively than any other single story the philosophy which is embodied in all. Be base, brutal and insignificant, says Tchekhoff, and, though you will not be happy, the worst misfortune that will befall you will be that you will be pursued throughout life by a stupid, uncomprehending sense of your own ineffectiveness. Emerge for a moment into honorable aspiration or even into misguided passion, and you are face to face with a tragedy. Lunacy or suicide, therefore, is the end of the few aspiring men

who appear in his pages. That most men escape both lunacy and suicide Tchekhoff explains by painting the majority of them as feeble and insignificant. In the gray and circumscribed lives of his heroes and heroines there is no ambition, ardor, or exaltation, no enduring passion or consistent wickedness—only an infinite grinding of the petty against the base. There is an inherent cowardice and irresponsibility in the human soul which so controls things that great crises are invariably determined by petty accidents in themselves of no account, rather than by the passion or resolution of the persons concerned. Analyzed in this way, Tchekhoff appears as the exponent of a particularly ugly and hopeless pessimism. But though that is the final impression which his writings create, it is impossible to class him as a pessimist at all. His pages sparkle with the delicate humor and an irresponsible gaiety of a man who finds the world more charming than any optimist has ever found it. Yet the motive is insistent, and when you argue that all these men and women might be just as amusing without being quite so contemptible, Tchekhoff answers by returning to his thesis that if they were not contemptible they would be tragical.

Stupidity and callousness, and the eternal banal, argues Tchekhoff, are the guardians of most men against misfortune. In his own words, "the nervous, conscious life is incompatible with restful happiness." Against tragedy, barring the door, stands bathos; and it is by their irresponsible levity and meanness of soul that most men avoid shipwreck. This is the motive of *The Neighbors* (Sosyedi), one of Tchekhoff's most characteristic stories. Zina Ivashin, a young girl, has run away with Vlasitch, a married man, separated from his wife, who lives in

the neighboring village. The defender of the Ivashin's family honor, Peter Mikhailovitch, sits moodily at home and wonders what he ought to do. In her bedroom, in despair, weeps his old mother, the maids speak in whispers, and even the men-servants look reproachfully at Peter Mikhailovitch. But Ivashin does not rise to the occasion at all. He knows that his sister and her lover are both "Liberals," which in Russia implies freedom in religion and in morals as well as in politics. They have therefore a conscious justification of their action, and cannot be treated as sinners from vulgar passion. Nevertheless, something must be done; and Ivashin determines to drive to the seducer's house, denounce Vlasitch as a villain, strike him in the face, and either kill him or be killed in the inevitable duel. Personally he has not the slightest desire for any such tragical solution. But this remedy is simple and obvious, and he can think of no other. So, foaming with artificial blood-thirstiness, he drives to Vlasitch's house. Vlasitch is in his shirt-sleeves, driving nails into a broken shutter. "It's you, Petrusha," he begins affectionately, "I am delighted. . . . The rain will be good for the oats." And for an hour he babbles on childishly concerning the weather, his past life and his literary pursuits. "Yesterday Zina and I spent a most delightful evening after dinner. I read her aloud an admirable article upon the emigration question. Read it, brother, it is absolutely essential. I could not restrain myself, and wrote to the author a note expressing my gratitude. Just a line, 'I thank you from my heart, and warmly press your honest hand.'" And so on. Overcome by Vlasitch's stupidity, and the banality of the situation, Ivashin's bloody intentions disappear. He discusses the weather with his sister, and in the end drives home, escorted part of the way by the erring

pair. He is disgusted with his own weakness and cowardice, and can think of nothing but a story which Vlasitch with incredible stupidity has told him of a Frenchman who flogged to death a peasant whom he found making love to his daughter. "Olivier acted like an inhuman monster, yet . . . he decided the problem . . . I have only mixed things up, and have decided nothing. He said and did what he meant to say and do, but I say and do exactly the opposite. . . . Yes, and even what I did intend I myself do not know."

Essentially the same motive, though in forms varying so much as to be hardly recognizable, appears in nearly all Tchekhoff's longer stories. In *Babye Tzarstvo*<sup>4</sup> the familiarity of an impudent servant is enough to wreck a nascent romance. The heroine of this story is Anna Akimovna, a young, pretty and rich woman, the daughter of an illiterate mechanic, and the unexpected heiress of a wealthy iron-master. Anna's tragedy is that she wants to marry, and that an equivocal social position cuts her off alike from gentle and simple. She knows that her manager swindles her, that her workmen are neglected and live in filthy dens, that she receives every day anonymous letters denouncing her as a blood-sucker, and that she is getting on to thirty years of age. By accident she is brought into contact with Osip Pimenoff, one of her own employés, a healthy, honest, and intelligent man, living a clean life in clean surroundings, and devoting his spare hours to bettering his position. With his earnestness, his respectful devotion to herself, his practical knowledge of the factory, and his Atlantean frame, Pimenoff, she feels, is the one man who could at the same time make her happy and take from her shoulders the intolerable burden of responsibility for two thousand lives.

But, like most of Tchekhoff's heroes and heroines, Anna Akimovna is unfit to direct her own destiny. She rejects Pimenoff, not because she does not love him—though she is not even sure of that—but because the trivial elements entirely outweigh the essential. "If you set him at dinner with Victor Nikolaievitch and the general, he would die of fright," remonstrates an impudent footman. "Good heavens, ma'am, he doesn't know how to hold his fork."

"Mishenka's grin, his words, his short jacket and his whiskers produced in Anna Akimovna a feeling of uncleanness. She shut her eyes to avoid seeing him, and, in spite of her feelings, could not help drawing a picture of Pimenoff dining at the same table with Luishevitch and Krullin, and his respectful, uncultivated face seemed to her pitiable and helpless, and filled her with disgust."

This incorrigible levity of the human soul in face of great crises runs through nearly everything Tchekhoff has written. The hero of the story *The Problem*,<sup>5</sup> Sasha Uskoff, having squandered his scanty allowance, forges a bill of exchange. His good-natured uncle to save the honor of the family, pays the amount. But Sasha, so far from being touched with penitence and gratitude, only draws the lesson that there are more fools and gulls in the world than he had imagined. When Uncle Ivan Markovitch, having won over to clemency a whole college of hostile relations, came out of the council-chamber, he is met by Sasha with the demand for a hundred roubles. Ivan Markovitch refuses. "Then I shall give myself up to the police," threatens Sasha, "and all your efforts to save the family honor will be wasted." Ivan Markovitch pleads, argues, hesitates—and hands over the money. And triumphant Sasha, as he goes off to join his boon

<sup>4</sup> "Poviesti i Razkazul." St. Petersburg. 1899.

<sup>5</sup> "Razkazul." Twelfth edition. St. Petersburg. 1898.

companions, for the first time realizes that it is a foolish thing to commit forgery when the fruits are to be had by such simple means as threatening to commit it.

But Tchekhoff is never satisfied with pouring upon his heroes and heroines the vials of a merely objective contempt. Feeble, paltry, pusillanimous as appear the children of this world to one another, they are in each of these respects more lacking in manhood when examined under the microscope of their own minds. Tchekhoff revels in the analysis of insulted and humiliated spirits, who, while flaming with indignation against an unappreciative world, are at the same time penetrated through and through with contempt for themselves. The descent to this *Avernus* of self-contempt is ever easy for his sensitive heroes. A word at a social gathering, an imagined insult, a trifling unintentional slight, are sufficient to drive them into a course of pessimistic introspection in which the whole nakedness of their souls is held up to their own laughter and to ours. It is not sufficient for his heroes to be insignificant and insipid—they must know it, and to the analysis of their self-revelation Tchekhoff devotes page after page. We have already seen Ivashin, disgusted with the banal part he has played in his miscarried tragedy. The *Master of Literature*<sup>6</sup> is another of these spiritless weaklings, humiliated by the sense of his own ineffectiveness. He has been asked before a roomful of guests whether he has ever read Lessing's *Dramaturgie*, and the fact that he, an authority upon literature, has been obliged to admit that he has never read so important a work, drives him in the end to the verge of insanity. In another story Perekladin,<sup>7</sup> a petty official, goes home from an evening party

in rage and humiliation, because he has been told by an impudent youth that he is not an educated man. Perekladin has been in the Civil Service for forty years, and his insulter bases the indictment on the fact that although he may punctuate his papers correctly, he cannot give any conscious reasons for the employment of the different signs. Tchekhoff draws a most ludicrous picture of the offended Perekladin writhing on his conjugal couch at the thought that he can give no reason for doing what he has done correctly after forty years' experience. At last, with the aid of a more accomplished wife, he gets a fairly accurate definition of the various signs. "A note of exclamation?" cries his wife. "Why everyone knows! A note of exclamation is used after expressions indicative of rapture, indignation, terror, joy, fear, or any other feeling." And as Perekladin's memory goes back over forty years of his monotonous official career, he realizes that although in that period he has written thousands upon thousands of official documents, he has never once had an opportunity to express rapture, indignation, terror, joy, or fear.

In stories like these Tchekhoff poses for a moment as a humorist. But it is never as a good-humorist, and alike from shadowy uncompleted sketch and elaborate analysis, rings out the reiterated lesson that life is not a chain of tragedies, passions, or infatuations, but a tedious recurring cycle of vulgar weaknesses, continuous humiliation, and ultimate self-contempt.

The story *At the Manor*,<sup>8</sup> with its hero Rashevitch, is in this respect typical of Tchekhoff's art. Rasevitch is an ignorant, poor, and mean-spirited country-gentleman, with two daughters of more than marriageable age, and a single hypothetical suitor as their only hope.

<sup>6</sup> "Poviesti i Razkazul." St. Petersburg. 1898.

<sup>7</sup> "Ploetirige Paskazul." Twelfth edition. St. Petersburg. 1898.

<sup>8</sup> "Poviesti i Razkazul." St. Petersburg. 1898.

At bottom he knows himself to be a good-humored, even a playful old man, yet he is pursued by some strange fatality which makes him quarrel with everyone. The suitor, Meyer, is a man of no origin, yet such is Rashevitch's incorrigible love of hearing his own voice that he cannot resist forcing upon him a wholly meaningless argument as to the virtue and dignity of the "white bone" (blue blood). Rashevitch, who has never read a scientific work in his life, pictures himself as "an incorrigible Darwinist, to whom, therefore, race, aristocracy, noble blood, are no empty sounds." The insulted suitor leaves the house in anger; and Rashevitch goes to bed with the exclamation of his disappointed daughters ringing in his ears: "The toad! the toad!" But it is not Tchekhoff's method to be content with leaving the sequel to the reader's imagination. He pursues the wretched Rashevitch into his bedroom, and revels in his humiliation.

When he got to his room Rashevitch sat upon the end of his bed and undressed himself slowly. He felt whipped in spirit, and was tormented by a feeling which made it seem to him that he had been eating soap. . . . He was thoroughly ashamed of himself. When he had finished undressing he looked for a time at his long, veined, old man's legs, and remembered that all over the district he was nicknamed "the toad," and that never a long conversation passed without leaving him thoroughly disgusted with himself. He was convinced that he always entered into conversation quietly, kindly, and with the best intentions, calling himself genially an "idealist," an "old student," or a "Don Quixote," but, as if by some fatality little by little and imperceptibly, he passed into calumny and abuse, and dogmatized upon art and science and morals, although twenty years had passed since he had read a single book or been farther than the government town. . . . Rashevitch awoke in a fright, and, first of all, remembered the misunderstanding of the

evening before, deciding that in all probability Meyer would never set foot in his house again. He remembered that the interest must be lodged in the bank, that he must find husbands for his daughters, that he must eat and drink; and he thought of old age, illness and unpleasantness, that winter would soon be upon him, and that there was no wood. . . .

It was nine o'clock. Rashevitch dressed himself slowly, drank a cup of tea, and ate two large slices of bread and butter. His daughters did not appear; they had no desire to see his face, and that offended his pride. He lay awhile on the study sofa, and then took a seat at the table, and began to write a letter to his daughters. His hand trembled, and his eyes itched, but he went on writing. He wrote that he was growing old, that nobody wanted him, and that nobody loved him, so he begged his daughters to forget him, and when he died to bury him without ceremony in a plain deal coffin, or to send his old body to Kharkoff to the Anatomical Museum. He felt that every line breathed malice and affectation. But he could not restrain himself, and wrote on and on and on. . . .

And in the midst of his composition come the hissing voices of his offended daughters: "The toad! the toad!"

This shameless stripping of the last rags of dignity from the human soul is Tchekhoff all over. There is a pitiless assiduity, a wanton ferocity in his pursuit of his victims which is absolutely without parallel outside the pages of Swift. But Tchekhoff's writings, unlike Swift's, do not contain from beginning to end a single word of open or implied satire upon humanity as a whole. The method of his art is wholly objective, and therein lies its effectiveness. It is the persistency with which he creates, in varying scenes and under varying circumstances, whole processions of men and women differing in nearly every moral and intellectual quality, but united by a common bond of vacuity and feebleness that betrays his philosophy. Taken singly, his stories read like



good-humored banter of the idiosyncrasies of commonplace men and women. It is necessary to read half-a-dozen before you suspect that there is a subjective tendency, which, though skillfully hidden away by the author, is the secret motive of each. But the cumulative impression of the whole is an impression of overpowering consistency and universal application. That life is a nightmare of abysmal emptiness, that all men are ridiculous in one another's eyes, and contemptible in their own, that no man is master of his own fate, and that genius, courage and virtue are, by a law of nature, inevitably shipwrecked in a world for which they are by nature unfitted—such is the final impression.

Tchekhoff is never more vivid and convincing than when he insists upon this last and most melancholy of lessons. How he works it out in *Ward No. 6* I have already shown. But it appears in others of his stories. In the interminable sea of desolation which he delights to paint, an heroic head emerges now and again; you watch for a moment the gleam from the eye of genius and faith, and feel that even the pitiless analyst is longing to clutch the outstretched hand. But where the nature of life—life base, uncomprehending and banal—is not too much for these exceptional men, some trivial accident intervenes, and the struggler goes under forever. Such is the fate of Likharyoff, the hero of *On the Way*,\* the most brilliant and despairing story that Tchekhoff ever wrote. Likharyoff is of a type very common in Russian literature, a "Dmitri Rudin," or, as Matthew Arnold phrased it, an "ineffectual angel." He embodies those qualities of faith and defects of feebleness which Russian writers agree upon as inherent in the character of the Slavs. "The Russians," said Dostoyeffsky,

"are all ardor, imagination, and faith." "The Slavs," said Turgenieff, "all suffer from instability of will." Likharyoff's faith and ardor are strong to the point of infatuation, but in nothing has he the steadfastness of will to pursue a single purpose to an objective end. "Nature," he says himself, "has set in every Russian an inquiring mind and an extraordinary capacity for faith . . . but all our qualities are broken into dust against our indolence and shiftlessness." It is the life confession of this impassioned and ever-infatuated man which makes up the story *On the Way*.

It is worked out in twenty pages of dazzling wit, pathos and incomparable descriptive beauty. The snow-bound country-inn, with its roaring stove-pipe; the guest-room intermittently illumined by a guttering dip, its rude pictures of seraphim and Nasr Edin; the whining of little Sasha as her father's extraordinary life-story, poured forth in torrents of naïve eloquence, keeps her awake through the long night; the amazement and sudden comprehension of Likharyoff's auditor, Mademoiselle Ilovaïskaya; and the sudden breakdown of both when, blending their voices with the peevish child's complaints, all sob together in a discord of common misery, form a series of pictures overwhelming in their pathos and reality. In the morning, Mademoiselle Ilovaïskaya, having awakened a vain hope in the perishing Likharyoff's heart, drives away through the snow, and he, whose temporary, but as ever over-mastering, infatuation had persuaded him that this sensitive, sympathetic girl had forgiven him his age and misfortunes, and was ready to go after him to the ends of the earth, is left standing enraptured in the snow "till the traces of the sledge-runners had been effaced forever, and he, enshrouded in snow, began to resemble a white rock, his eyes all the time con-

\* "V. Sumerkakh." Thirteenth edition. St. Petersburg. 1899.

tinuing to search for something through the clouds of snow."

"Russian life presents itself as a continuous series of faiths and infatuations, but negation or unbelief it has not—if I may so express it—even smelt. A Russian may not believe in God, but that is merely a way of saying that he believes in something else." This is the keynote of Likharyoff's confession (a note the antithesis of Tchekhoff's own); and it is worked out on the narrow canvas of twenty pages crowded with living imagery and delightful humor. "I was a believer from my earliest childhood," says Likharyoff. "My mother used to make us eat a lot, and when she fed us used to say 'Eat, children, there is nothing on earth like soup.' I took my soup as a religion, and swallowed it to the point of loathing and nausea. When I learned to read the Bible, I tried to become a monk, and hired boys to torture me for Christ's sake. But when I went to school, and was taught that the earth goes round the sun, and that white light is not white at all, but is composed of seven primary colors, my head fairly went round. At home everything seemed hideous—my mother in the name of Elijah denying lightning conductors, my father indifferent to the truths I had learnt. Like a madman I rushed about the house. I preached my truths to the stable boys. I was driven to despair by ignorance—I flamed with hatred against those who saw in white light only white." And so on all through life. The infatuation for science declined when Likharyoff, having been told that zoology counted thirty-five thousand species of insects, himself discovered a thirty-five thousand and first. But with an equal ardor he thrust himself into Nihilism; and from this passed to maniacal adoration of the lives and creations of the common people. He had been in succession a Slavophile, an Ukrainophile,

an archaeologist, and had boxed the compass of beliefs from willing martyrdom in the name of Christ to perverting nuns to atheism and infidelity. "Five years ago," he concludes, "I served as the negation of property; my latest faith was non-resistance to evil."

Likharyoff, admirable even in his extravagance and pathetic in his end, is an exceptional figure in that aggregation of apes and oddities which makes up Tchekhoff's world. His fate becomes him in a world too circumscribed for humane enthusiasm or exalted faith, and he has escaped that deluge of the banal which has submerged the rest of his kind. Having rid himself, as he is convinced the world rids itself, of abnormal embodiments of virtue, Tchekhoff returns with whetted appetite to his pursuit of the feeble and foolish. The quality of his genius admirably equips him for this. He has an unerring eye for every little vulgar trait, whether of manner or mind, that makes men and women ridiculous. He seizes on those actual, living words and phrases, which we hear every day, but seldom see in print, and compresses, as men compress in real life, into a single vivid but untranslatable sentence a whole life of vulgar emotion. His trick of repeating again and again a single phrase, and sometimes using an expressive sentence as the motive of a story, produce upon the reader an extraordinary effect. That the mere expression and analysis of the banal ideas of banal persons uttered in banal words could sustain a continuous interest seems incredible. But the glowing verisimilitude which comes from actual observation, the cunning of a restrained hand that excludes the slightest intrusion of the superfluous, and the sharp objectivity of everything, turn the base metal in which Tchekhoff works into refined gold. He is at his best when his scenes, his characters are at their worst. But when he cannot have them morally

worthless he makes them ridiculous; and he plays the valet to otherwise estimable men, and describes in curt sentences full of compressed detail the little absurdities with which they put on their clothes and eat their food, harping back to them again and again until the reader is convinced that the way Ivan Lvovitch holds his knife, and Sophia Alexeyevna blows her nose, are the most significant things in their lives. But Tchekhoff is not a Boswell, and you seldom rise from reading his stories with an impression of solid greatness or moral worth effacing the image of his heroes' idiosyncrasies. Upon the top of their simian tricks, and painted in even more vivid colors, rises the picture of their vapid intellects, their meretricious sentiments, their stagnant lives. The final impression is that life is *A Dull Story*,<sup>10</sup> and that—to quote the words in which the "Master of Literature" sums up his tragedy of disillusion—"tiresome, insignificant men, pots of clotted cream, jugs of milk, beetles, and stupid women," are the beginning and end of all things on earth.

It would seem inevitable that a writer with a vision so narrow and intense should be subjective in his art. But it is the admitted merit of Tchekhoff that he is the most objective writer of modern Russia, not even excepting Turgenieff, who could not always restrain himself from putting his occidental philosophy into the mouths of chosen heroes. The subjectivity of Tchekhoff is confined to the selection of his scenes and social medium; these being determined, he is content to leave his characters on paper and let them speak and act for themselves. If they never open their mouths or lift their hands without betraying the mark of the beast, that is their nature. An antecedent subjectivity has taken them,

mean and insignificant, from a mean and insignificant medium. But their manners and morals are their own; and they develop logically through their intolerably tiresome lives. There is hardly a single generalization, outside his dialogues, to be found in all Tchekhoff's writings; he never dallies to enforce a moral; he never employs his heroes as mouthpieces—they are much too stupid to have any conscious philosophy. His disillusion is visible only in the restriction of his canvas to a disillusioned world. In this respect Tchekhoff differs widely from Gorki, who, through the lips of his heroes, is ever breaking out into petulant rebellion against the emasculated modern world in which force and cunning are cheated of their just reward. And Tchekhoff's disillusion is not the disillusion of a *poseur*, any more than it is the product of a reasoned philosophy, or—commonest of all disillusion—the scorn of the feeble for a world in which they are unfitted to take a worthy part. It is apparently a genuine temperamental incapacity to see anything but the unworthier sides of life—its littleness, its lack of interest, its triumphant mediocrity, its evanescence in the present and past, its vacuity in the future. Yet it is upon this desert of desolation that his garden of roses is reared. By some strange reversal of the ordinary laws of art, the more aimless his motives, the more monotonous his background, the more vapid his characters, the more glowing and lifelike are his pictures. He dazzles by analysis of the simplest things; and the blinding monotonous glare that beats upon a disenchanting world emerges from his prismatic pen in all the gorgeous colors of the rainbow. That this is art of a high order is beyond question. And in turn it interacts upon our appreciation of Tchekhoff's philosophy. For if this vapid and objectless existence, when painted by a skilful hand, appears the

<sup>10</sup> The title of one of Tchekhoff's longest stories

most lifelike of all, it is impossible to deny its reality, and even, as Tchekhoff will have it, its predominance over every other.

Tchekhoff's literary activity, it should be said in conclusion, is not confined to the novel, or, more strictly speaking, to the short story, for no one of his publications attains the proportions of a novel. He has published also a volume of plays,<sup>11</sup> and two of these, *Ivanof* and *Tchaika* (*The Gull*) have been put on the stage, one with great success. But it is difficult to see where, save in the celebrity of the writer and in the stagnation of the Russian drama since the death of Ostrovsky, their attractiveness lies. The effective drama is based too much upon great motives and sharp contrasts of character and interest to be in consonance with Tchekhoff's talent. Frivolity has made successful plays, but a continued exposition of the banal never did. Trivial motives, monotonous backgrounds, and the fundamental lack of the heroic, which increase their interest in the dissecting-room of the analytical novelist, in the drama are merely meaningless. In Tchekhoff's dramas his peculiar genius is obscured, the subjective element, generally suppressed, becomes apparent, and there is no compensatory element of ingenuity of plot or delineation of character. Suicide, preluded by disillusion and madness, is the *dénouement* of both *Ivanof* and *The Gull*. But, except in their conclusions, there is little in them to recall Tchekhoff the novelist.

Tchekhoff has sometimes been mis-called a satirist of that class of Russian society upon whose ills and incapacities he lays so hard a hand. But it is certainly only the accident of birth which makes him hit out at Russia and, in particular, at the Russian middle-

class; the universal scarecrow, humanity, is in reality his target. The bases of real satire lie deeply rooted in contrast with the good, and in faith in final betterment. There is no trace of such faith or even of indignation in Tchekhoff's pages. He makes no open complaint against the existing order, he exposes no particular wrong, he even takes things like a genial philosopher. But it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that he does this not because he sees any single element of betterment in the world, but because he is firmly convinced that the emptiness of life is eternal and irremediable. In one of those rare passages in which Tchekhoff the pessimist has succeeded in stealing the pen of Tchekhoff the artist, this philosophy is expressed with an unaccustomed openness. It is apparently the beginning and end of Tchekhoff's view of life; and it is the fittest conclusion for a criticism of his works:

"The Student remembered that when he left the house his mother sat in the hall, barefooted, and cleaned the samovar; and his father lay upon the stove and coughed; and because it was Good Friday nothing was being cooked at home, though he was tortured with desire to eat. And now, shivering with the cold, the Student reflected that just the same icy wind blew in the reign of Rurik, in the reign of Ivan the Terrible, and in the reign of Peter the Great; that there was just the same gnawing hunger and poverty, just the same dilapidated thatched roofs, just the same ignorance, the same boredom with life, the same desert around, the same darkness within, the same sentiment of oppression—that all these terrors were and are and will be, and that though a thousand years may roll by, life can never be any better."

R. E. C. Long.

<sup>11</sup> "Piesl." St. Petersburg. 1897.

## AN ISOLATED CASE.

It was not splendid isolation—only confluent smallpox of a virulent type, in the city of Tokyo, month of February, and year of our Lord 1897 (or of Jimmu Tenno 2557). It came about this way. Japan, having recently emerged from darkness into light, began to yearn with pity for poor Korea, who had not yet followed suit. It was Korea's acquiescence in the blighting influence of Chinese stagnation that held her so enthralled in medieval gloom; and chivalrous Japan made up its mind that, *coûte que coûte* (for we are dabs at Western languages out there), Korea must be freed, set on her own legs, and have an opportunity of working out her own salvation. What chivalry inspired sound statesmanship indorsed; for was not Russia creeping Chinawards resistless as a glacier, longing for the warm water that laps the Korean coast, while China sat stupidly gazing, inert and impotent: a daring effort must be made to dominate the jutting territory, and establish a buffer-state which would keep the huge neighbors of Japan on the coolest of visiting terms. Hence the war of 1894-95, when David faced Goliath, and, being in thorough training, thrashed him. Japan became master of the Liao-tung peninsular, with Port Arthur and other salient points, a barrier-wedge of land which, under Japanese administration, would effectually block the southerly march of Russia. In Far Eastern matters, however, *tout le monde propose, mais la Russie dispose*, and on this occasion at least she so prevailed (our Government sitting on its usual fence) that she induced the two bitterest enemies in Europe to unite with her in

signing a round-robin, full of sweet reasonableness, which they handed in at Tokyo. This document explained that, though Japan might imagine the Liao-tung to be hers by right of conquest in a fairly fought war, yet Christendom, the patentees of International Law, could by no means countenance indecent "rights" when claimed by victors with a yellow skin: "Drop it, good dog!" they said; "you may have Formosa instead." As England looked the other way, there was no alternative but to yield to the triple revolver pointed at her head. So Japan gave up her lawful prize and proceeded to occupy Formosa. Her troops found their deadliest enemy in the filth of the Chinese quarters of the large Formosan towns, and it was not long after the return of some of these troops in the autumn of '96 that Tokyo flamed out in an epidemic, smallpox dashed with plague. This was so severe that (out of 15,000 cases in three months) 65 per cent of the cases proved fatal.<sup>1</sup> "two were taken, the other was left"—the present writer being one of the minority.

It was Tokyo on the last day of January 1897. We had had a plebald month. During the first fortnight everything was abandoned to the festivities attendant on New Year: streets one long evergreen avenue of pine and bamboo (planted for "luck" and "long life" in front of each house), crowded with cheery idlers and happy children flitting like human flower-beds in their radiant robes, ecstatic at the empire of ravishing toys that stretched before them, while overhead from every roof waved the scarlet disc on the national flag, and the roadway all day long was

<sup>1</sup> Though vaccination in Japan is compulsory, repeated much more frequently than with us, and carried out entirely with Government gly-

cerine-lymph from the calf, it is not very satisfactory in its results.



a giddy maze of jinrikishas flashing to and fro, laden with well-dressed heads of families bent on the orthodox visits of congratulation. Then came the sudden death of the Dowager-Empress; at one stroke the great city became a funeral show; the tens of thousands of flags were lowered half-mast, and in their place ten thousand long black streamers gloomily shivered in the Siberian breeze. Theatres were closed for fifteen days, at the university—incredible dictu—lecture-rooms were empty for a week, public music ceased for fifty days, and in private houses until after the funeral, while the Diet voted £80,000 for the expenses of the imperial pageant.

It was a grim and frosty day without a break of sun, the kind of weather when foreign criticism of things Japanese is apt to be bitter, when the sloppy shuffling click of the *geta* (wooden clogs) becomes more exasperating than usual, and the smell from insanitary canals unbearable. I was lunching with some American friends at a pretty semi-Japanese house three miles from the hotel where I lived beside the Sumida (the Tokyo Thames), but I left them rather abruptly and hurried home, because of a most uncomfortable brain.

I was soon in bed, where a raging headache kept me awake for a day and a half; then the doctor (there was only one English doctor—and he a Scotsman—in this city of 1,500,000 bodies) gave his verdict, "*hoso*" (smallpox). Promptly, as if I were a live shell, measures were taken for my expulsion. Not far from the hotel was a four-roomed bungalow occupied by a Scottish lady and her young daughter: in a couple of hours these friends-in-need cleared out all their furniture, pictures, books, and divided the house into two isolated halves of two rooms each, locking the doors of communication and

pasting over them on both sides sheets of stout paper from ceiling to floor.

Meanwhile, eager to utilize my last moments of sanity, a deputation of British residents had arrived at the bedside. A countrywoman of mine in Yokohama (eighteen miles away) had just been sentenced to death on the charge of poisoning her husband, and to save her life with due form it was required that three of her countrymen should be found, disinterested and reputable, to sign a petition to the British Minister, praying him to exercise the prerogative of mercy with which he was (until 1899) intrusted in those far-away longitudes: my double qualification of newcomer and Government employee indicated me as a suitable signatory. The kind-hearted deputation read and reread the petition, but I could not "get the hang of it," and when at last I saw some gleam of lucidity running through it, I still thought the condemned woman might wait, rather than I should have to sit up to sign. A few minutes' judicious coaxing, however, and I did the deed, after which subsiding, I ran away from reality for many days. Everything being now ready for my removal, four of the hotel "boys" came in smiling as though it were a festival, and, passing ropes beneath the mattress, tied me up in a cylindrical bundle, and carried me out by a back-way down a steep ladder to the vacant bungalow: here I sat by a blazing stove, while they spread the blankets on the bed; I was unconscious before they lifted me in. . . . When I awoke it was midnight; the room was quite dark except for the flicker of a stove; sitting in front of it with their backs to me were two young women smoking curious metal pipes (this was allowed in every loathsome case), chattering confidentially with the gayest laughter. (They were excellent trained nurses, as I afterwards proved.) My

head being still on the rack, I waited a minute to see if they would not look my way, then suddenly stepped out of bed and came behind their chairs, laying a hand on the shoulder of each to steady myself. "*Takusan hanashi!*" I sternly yelled in crudest Japanese (for I had been only a few months in Japan), "*ikenai! hadzukashi!*" ("Too much talk! I won't have it! disgraceful!") They dropped their pipes in dismay, scared by such a disturbance from a patient of 105°; the younger one burst into tears, and both appealed to me with torrents of their native tongue. As I had no idea what they said, I gripped the younger one and thrust her inside her sleeping-room, locked the door, knocked the other girl into her chair, and went back to bed. I heard sobs from the maiden in the dark, but she and I soon fell asleep. (Next day she prevailed on the doctor to let her go, for she was afraid of the violent foreigner; a tougher substitute took her place.)

The morrow broke miserably, and I got out of bed to reconnoitre. I stared at the roofs and sounds of a strange city: pulpy snow lay thick in the road, and a clammy wind was slopping round the corners. Some woman (in whom I did not recognize the nurse) was on her knees within the porch, busy with bucket and rag. She tried to lead me back to my bed, but I insisted on stationing myself at the open door, peering through the snowflakes, wondering what had come to the universe. I asked her—in English—why I was thus imprisoned in a dark hole, robbed of my clothes, left without food or cigarettes. She replied, in Japanese,—though the sounds seemed those of an inhuman land,—that his Majesty the Emperor had conceived a plan for ascertaining the real merits of the various foreign employees in his service at that date. Each of those gentlemen when he awoke this morning would find himself

in a part of the world he had never been in before, hopelessly cut off from any previous friend or means of influence; he would have lost any knowledge of the language which he might have acquired, and he would, moreover, be so disfigured by a revolting eruption on his skin that acquaintances would pass him by; while he would have to get on as best he could in the wintry air with a simple suit of pyjamas. His Imperial Majesty laid special stress on the pyjama regulation, as his object was to discover what we really were when stripped of adventitious prestige and suddenly reduced to our lowest terms. I replied that the August Design was schoolboy nonsense—bricks without straw was nothing compared with it. "I don't know where I am," I said, "and if I speak to any one they only laugh." A coolie was passing at the moment, carrying milk for some foreigners' breakfast, and to illustrate my point I stepped out into the road and hailed him eagerly: he grinned from ear to ear, and with a shrug pursued the path of duty. "You might as well," I continued, "lead a lot of blind men inside a printing-office, and ask them to set up the morning paper!" The repellent female laid her hand on my arm and earnestly replied, "It is all right,—you all have the same chance; the best will find a way out." Again she tried to draw me in under cover; but on gazing at my fingers it occurred to me that if I only showed myself long enough some one must notice such a hideous foreigner, and might tell other foreigners of my whereabouts. (I knew I was a "foreigner," but was unaware of "Englishmen" or "Japanese.") I would have gone out scouting in the streets, but there was something wrong with my legs which prevented my standing without support, so at last in utter disgust I brushed aside the ex-postulating wench, and marched back into bed, murmuring loudly at the se-

verity of the test involved in his Imperial Majesty's experiment. She showed me a syphon of soda for reward, but neither hunger nor thirst entered my head; I had no notion I was ill—simply in a wretched predicament, powerless as a baby, yet served with a monstrous task.

I lay down, and for more than a month—though it was only half a day—I lost my way along a lovely part of the Pacific shore, where the landscape was honeycombed with surprises, events repugnant to all human experience, and so infinite in their variety that it made me ache to think of remembering them. Every bend in the path led without fail into a torture-trap, a mental torture-trap. . . . Now I was fast in one, snared for the rest of my life. I was on a huge turn-table, raised high above the fields, fenced all round its rim with tall wire-netting which forbade any chance of escape. It revolved with ponderous speed, humming like a vast infernal top (the stove in the room had begun to "draw"), but presently it slackened speed, and with most measured cruelty showed signs of coming to rest. With maddening deliberation it finally stood poised for one second motionless; in that bare pause a small area of the wire enclosure at a certain spot leapt back like a valve; through that orifice darted out three men whom I had not before noticed as being with me, and before I could gasp the door had shut, leaving no hint of its locality, the massive platform was again gliding round with an ever-accelerating speed, and myself alone marooned in an unknown maze. I could hear the three liberated men shouting to me that it was Perpetual Motion, and, save for the periodic momentary pause, the turn-table would revolve forever; my only chance was to "spot" the opening door and fly headlong through the instant I detected it; that as at each fresh pause the opening would ap-

pear at some new point on the circumference, it were best to stand near the centre and keep a sharp look-out in every direction simultaneously. I was dizzy before, and these instructions made me mad—though I accepted the problem as a matter of course. . . . Another variation. The wire-fence had become a smooth circumference of solid steel, seamless, with no suspicion of an outlet anywhere. Worse still, I heard a child's cry of terror, and a young girl of eleven (it must have been the beautiful child of a Spanish secretary of Legation who lived near by) rushed to me wild with alarm, appealing for help to get her out. Time after time the hollow dome—it was no longer open to the sky above—slackened and paused with its mocking invitation to alight; but time after time I failed to catch the aperture, dragging the child hither and thither in desperate rushes. Now the aperture each time was narrower than the last; I had to cease dragging the girl, and hurled her in front of me at the first sign of an opening: we were both panting and worn out, half-blinded and bruised by countless collisions against that impenetrable steel. It was about the thousandth slack, just as I felt my strength could not avail for more than one last demoniacal dash—when, close to where we stood, the smooth wall "gave" for the briefest wink of time; with a yell of triumph I shot her through with brutal force, heard her severed cry, and fell down breathless on the cursed rumbling floor, filled with an intoxication of relief. . . . The doomed rotating prison as stealthily shrinking its diameter; unless I soon escaped I must finally be crushed to pulp—and that in a terribly deliberate way—as the metallic mass contracted to a solid spindle core. I took out my watch and other hard substances from my pockets, for I dreaded to feel them slowly boring through my chest. . . . I wished I

could take out my ribs as well, it would make the *finale* so much easier. . . . I grabbed at them with my fingers eagerly. . . .

A beautiful soft sun was certainly going to rise somewhere, and I lay on a bed in a world of nothing in particular. (I was conscious—or "dys-conscious"—mostly at dawn, and when the sun was setting through the room.) The shrill cry of an evil-omened bird vibrated in the air (the early "buzzer" of the Ishikawajima dockyard), and uncouth sounds disturbed my neighborhood. Two repulsive females were harshly vociferating (the gentlest voices on this earth), and darting malicious eyes at me: they were eating a huge white root, which had the vilest smell (the Japanese *daikon*, a monster radish of garlic pungency). I loathed them on the spot, and an overwhelming desire for Escape surged in my brain; I tried to rise, but could not even sit upright—for of course those savage women had poisoned me while I slept. Then a Japanese man approached the bed; I instantly recognized him, with indignation, as a man of humble rank whom I had recently assisted with a loan (he was instructor to the student-interpreters at the British Legation, and Sir Ernest Satow had kindly lent him for a few days at the doctor's request, to restrain my fancy for excursions to the street). I listened while this traitor and the women began to expatiate on the death by torture to which they would presently consign me. It appeared that foreigners were all to be got rid of; and they spent the whole of one sunny day explaining to me by the aid of diagrams (they were reading and laughing over Tokyo illustrated papers) the many varieties of cruel death from which I should be allowed to select my own. Remembering the horrors of the Turn-table—which now seemed back in prehistoric times—I insisted on Death in the Open as

opposed to Death between Walls. "Very well," they cried, "you shall be taken up on the heights above Nikko, where Iyeyasu sent his favorite horse to graze till death, and it will be like this!"—on which they showed me the details of a previous case, a naked man tossed high in the air from one thorn-bush to another, next dragged at lightning speed through the slush of paddy-fields, thrown down a waterfall to clean himself, then tied to a kite and sent up nearly out of sight, to drop with a crash through the towering cryptomerias. "The air is so good up there," they said, "that one needs a lot of killing!"

Then the male villain crept cautiously to my side, a glass of suspicious liquid in his hand, begged me to swallow it—and in return I hit the glass to smithereens across the room. The ill-favored women raised a chorus of abuse, but the man only smiled a velvety smile, and came again with a spoonful of the cowardly fluid, which he put near my mouth, first pressing his other brawny arm (he was a noted fencer) against my prostrate form. I decided to have it, because it might possibly cut short the Open-Air part of the business. Having swallowed it, I dug my nails into his arm, and asked him, "When does the performance begin?" He bent down with solemn face, took my watch from its hook, and pointing to the dial (he thought I wished to know when the next dose would be), said in a kindly earnest tone "*Háchiji ni!*" repeating it with more distinctness, "*ha-chi-ji-ni.*" I knew at once that he was saying "At eight o'clock"; but what language it was never occurred to me, though it was the first word I had understood since my long captivity began (the sounds were familiar, because he had lately given me lessons in Japanese). Anyhow, I was glad to think it would happen that very night. I turned to the syphon of soda always near my side (I

knew it as an old friend, but not as "soda"), helped myself neatly to a full wine-glass, and lay down more or less content. Then I carefully wound up my watch—a watch that had looked on many glorious views—and felt some regret that I should never do it again. The sun began—as I remembered it had been doing every day of late—to fill the room with a pulsing tide of heavenly color; enchanting tints spread in and out among the hill-ranges (the pattern of the paper on the walls), and I troubled not at all about the merciless rumbling of the iron millstones (the poor old stove again) between which one of my legs was to be ground up fine before I went to execution. Lost in these archipelagoes of softly shifting rainbow hue (as the window-curtain lifted in the evening breeze) neither Present, Past, nor Future occupied my brain; I was a unit long detached from any echo of other existence; and the kindly Universe of comforting color—crimson, gold, and glacier-green—swelled step by step to such bewitching splendor that I had to hold my breath. . . .

Dull prosaic dawn again, and the hideous peal of that hooting beast outside. Figures moved about the room, shapes without any relation to me. I got up, stood on the floor, and pushed through them as though they were shadows. There were four doors in the room, and on two of these I resolved to concentrate what strength I had; they were covered over every crack and keyhole with a metallic layer—probably aluminum steel; these, then, would lead to the Outside, where there must be sounds and sights, instead of that irresponsive blank which lay like lead in every cranny of my neighborhood. I seized a poker from the stove, and labored hard with calm methodic stroke to batter through the plating which sealed my doom: there was unlimited time, and it was only a matter of so

many thousand blows to force a breach (it is true there were three windows more inviting, but they offered no provocation, for the visible world showed through). Though I struck hard and incessantly, a strange silence prevailed; once a gibbering female came and gesticulated with insane dumbshow; a touch of the poker made her vanish into mist. . . . What a whole holiday! just two doors to smash, and no one to interfere. Whereupon I laid the poker down in a hollow where I could find it again, and walked back into bed.

Five more days—or aeons—dawned and faded, filled with the same monotonous recital of torture to come. Each sunset I saw my three jailers smoking round the crackling stove, gloating on my imminent doom; each sunrise I lay and wondered how I could be still alive. I was tired of their minute and devilish procedure, forever coming to try the edge of their knife on my tongue or chest (the clinical thermometer). During all this measureless time my eye was fascinated by one particular torture-stroke, which faced me each second of the day and night. Just over the door that confronted me a female figure (so I construed the graining of the wood) held a tiny steel crossbow, aimed straight at my head with sleepless vigilance. The youngest girl took pains to explain to me (in reply to my repeated pointing) that from this bow, at the hour and minute decreed, the figure would let fly a minute chain-shot, two chilled-steel bullets linked by a fret-saw ribbon of toughened steel exactly the length of the space between the pupils of my eyes: thus each of the eyes would be destroyed, while the bridge of the nose would be severed by the band. She kindly thought it would not be fatal, merely the opening chord of a Death symphony.

To distract my thoughts from this inhuman bow I made a game of my own, which soon drew all my strength



into a frenzy with the fascination of its End. I would arrange all thinkable things in groups, until I reached the *summum genus* itself, that North Pole of attainment. Patience would be required—but how much nobler a game than Patience. I began with Bows; they were weapons or Arms; well, *women* had arms and weapons too—how about them? patience and skill will put them in their place. . . . Candidates for classification swarmed all day; the fields and hillsides showed them trooping in—what was one head against so vast a multitude? But a “racing” brain can accomplish any task by mere virtue of velocity, or at least leaps up at any hint of the Impossible. So, instead of sorting them out on the flat, I would get a better analytical view if I built them up like an Eiffel Tower of cards, taking great pains to be accurate with the foundations. After many hours of white-hot unremitting strain I was rapidly, with trembling fingers, closing in on the end of my Task, my blood boiling over with glee, when down at the very base of the edifice out walked a mutinous card, who said he had been ignorantly placed—and down came all my glorious work, flooring me as it fell.

And yet at random intervals (when the children of some Anglo-Saxon missionary trooped past the open window) it flashed across the leaden solitude that there were certainly some “Englishmen” about who would come to the rescue if they knew: then the flash went out, like a revolving light at sea. But one morning, when the three fiends were more vociferous than usual (they were reading the first announcement of a Change to Gold Standard in Japan), I arose from my bed, and determined to make a bid for outside aid. Going to a coat that hung upon the wall, I opened a card-case, found a pencil, and neatly wrote an appeal to a young secretary of the American Le-

gation—choosing him because of his height and athletic build. I gave him a clue to my whereabouts by telling him to “take a bee line from” another landmark towards a certain “ruined house,” whence a few yards to the left would bring him to my cave. Pleased with my strategy, I went to the window and launched this missive on the Outside, assured that it could not miscarry. After which, I forgot all about the man, or the prospect of help. [A fortnight later my nurses brought me a card, minutely covered with writing which they found beneath the window-sill, and supposed some friend to have left for my consolation. It was correctly spelt, except in the closing line, “as quick as you can for God’s sake,” where a capital B stood instead of a G.]

. . . . Another sunrise floated through the depths of this insufferable cave. The two females, exulting in devilish glee, were unrolling before the traitorous Teacher my death-warrant, so long expected, now at last arrived (it was a Japanese letter just come by post, containing Chinese characters too hard for the women to read.) At the sight of this decisive document, in an instant, like a Buddhist soul after many lives at length attaining Freedom, I knew that my time was come to burst through the iron web that had so long sealed me in from life. With easy inspiration I slipped into my *zori* (indoor sandals), took the key down from its nail, and in a trice unlocked the door. The Traitor flew at me; but with one hand I laid him on the floor, dashed through the door which led into the hall, and put the key in the lock of the outer door. Women and man closed in on me and cried aloud, tore at my garments, clung to my arms, but I smiled as I floored them again with a semi-circular sweep . . . and sallied out along on the edge of the Tsukiji canal, every cell in my lungs and brain bound-

ing with the triumph of Escape. Of course they followed me, but that was as they pleased. I was now in open air, the nightmare spell thrown off for ever, and Victory greeted me in every glint of the glorious sun. Feeling the frozen ground as little as though I trod on air—for "Release!" was the cry that went thrilling down the avenues of the expectant atoms in my blood—I lounged with exultation to and fro, opening my arms to the splendid breeze (a bitter nor'-wester) that whistled Freedom as it blew; even the ships, inanimate things, that float on this boundless blue (I had turned to the Sumida, thronged with sail), even they are Free, gliding some one way, some another, just as they choose. But what are they compared with Me! Here I brought up against the glass porch of a large building where some grinning faces seemed familiar (the "boys" were cleaning the hotel windows before breakfast); I tapped imperiously on the glass and they only grinned the more. Perhaps it was a spectral house, . . . and at that moment I caught sight of my own reflection in a window backed by shade. Astonished as a kitten first held up before a mirror, I gazed and stared with consuming interest. A frightful havoc glared at me, a loathsome, puffy, toad-like countenance, expression eaten out of it by a festering swamp of pulpy sores, some as large as a medal, lurid with fungus coloring, revolting in its filth. Putting up both hands to raise the blotchy bags that once were eyelids, I searched for some relics of the human soul divine; . . . a sphinx-like gleam of humor peered forth in response, a caretaker while the soul was away. And the hands themselves were a match to the face, fingers webbed apart by the pustules in between—the whole thing beneath the scorn of monkeys. In nowise saddened by the sight, I chuckled aloud. "No Englishman," I thought, "would ever

listen to what I say in this condition, and I might be given in charge. I can come out again whenever I choose, and it may be prudent to lie low for a bit. Besides, how cold it is!" So, strutting full of free-will, I soberly turned,—my escort, I noticed, still clamoring by my side,—headed back towards a nice European bungalow that stood handy, got into a cosy Christian bed that awaited me, and lost remembrance of affairs. This was the early morning of the ninth day—as calendars count—of my infinite wanderings.

. . . It was very dark outside, but a cheerful stove lit up a room in which I lay, neutral as stellar space, no thoughts or emotions, hunger or thirst, apprehensions or memories, kindred or nationality. There was a short struggle at the door and a white man entered, his face profusely red. Standing half-way between the door and me, spreading his legs to keep his equilibrium, he addressed me very earnestly, in words which I understood at once. "You are all right," he began; repeating the assurance many times; "don't you bother a bit! I'll see to everything for you; but promise you won't go out of doors again—there's Danger outside!" Seeing that he was a trusty friend (I had known him a month or two) I nodded serene assent, and wondered what would follow. He staggered around in the firelight, left the room, the episode was wiped out, and unconcern resumed its reign. [He was a man of brilliant intellect, constantly overcome by drink, brave and unselfish, long in the service of the Government, two years later dead, exhausted by Formosan fever.] . . . There was another short interlude, of a great broad-shouldered man, in black, who approached the bedside with Authority, put a pellet in my mouth, held my hand while I swallowed it, moving his lips to spell out—as from a tape—the urgent message, "*You must not go out,*"

then he too vanished as he came. As if any one wanted to go out or stir a finger, or be interrupted in any way.

. . . The night was crisp with frost, and quivering stars filled Heaven above the dark Pacific where ships of many lands moved to and fro on trails of light. But were they ships? were they not motionless? . . . It was the watch-fires on the field of Troy, that winter's night three thousand years ago,

when in heaven the stars about the moon  
Look beautiful; when all the winds are laid.

I knew I had heard of this before—now I saw the real thing. The ships of the Greeks lay silent on the midnight bay; dark groups of men stirred round the crackling fires; now and then messengers sped from tent to tent; a low hum of voices was the only sound: and what stars for audience! . . . The moon had risen; . . . did ever such a moon look down on earth! (a Tokyo winter night is marvellously clear) and I lay in the tranquil air on a flat house-top by night, steeped in content, certain that nothing would ruffle such a scene, moonlight in every crevice, flooding the eye and ear, the taste and smell, bathing every pore as soft as silk, a self-sufficing world of comprehending Touch. Moonlight and house-top . .

. . on such a night as this, . . . where was it? . . . on such a night as this.

. . . Innermost shade, where not a sound crept in: a haven of calm from the outside storm, a retreat no traveller will disturb. Before, behind, for miles on either side, stretched a velvety floor of deepest pillowy moss, a sea of minutest greenest growth, softer than swansdown to the feet: not quite level, but rising with most sumptuous curves (the bedclothes) to swell in beautiful "rollers" of divinest turf across the

middle distance. Distance! it was distance drawn out infinitely far; and down the shadowless aisles on every side the stillness was so deep that one heard the forest breathe. For it was a forest, when one raised the eye. Millions of mighty tree-trunks, noiseless as columns, soared in the silence out of sight, with neither beginning nor end: were they aerial trees? since they never reached the ground. Some hundred feet above the whispering turf each stately mammoth stem on its way to earth broke up into a thousand twisting ribbons of root, which streamed out horizontally and weaved themselves in air a maze of majestic trellis overhead; on this the veterans were poised—scarred veterans of a prehistoric age. Yet the aerial trellis was not self-sustained; avenues, till now invisible, appeared, of twining creepers colling round some hidden stem, and dropping straight to earth at careless intervals: these must support the towering growth above—but they must be of a magic fibre from another world, for they stand transparent to the view beyond. Endless room for wandering here, with never an obstacle around: no note of a single bird was heard, and always the hush of the forest above. .

. . The mossy floor itself was tracked with a pattern of secluded paths, each tempting to journey down its own immeasurable route; and, when one noticed, on these paths were tiny cheerful dwarfs, busy at some undiscoverable task. Hour after hour they bustled to and fro, jesting with pantomimic human smile: no speck of noise was wafted from their ceaseless toil (they were my nurses, doing needle-work), save that at each bare footfall on the cushioned moss there came a subterranean microscopic plash, as of moisture oozing in the depths; only in such a soundless forest could such drops of buried music catch the ear. . . Far up between the topmost

twigs the sunny heaven hovered blue and remote; now and then came an echo of the passing of a breeze beyond, a pulse too soft and kind to penetrate below: a distant tide of life might fringe the outer coast somewhere, but here, in the vastness of this cool retreat, Quiet held sway without one flick of stir, and boundless reaches of Rest lay hushed in the clean delicious air. Who would not stay for ever in a wishless calm like this?

\* \* \* \* \*

Some forty human hours had gone, when I opened my eyes and awoke—it seemed for the first time in my life. Bewitching sunlight sparkled in the room, and a new birth effervesced deep down—but very faint—in every feeble cell of my body. Through an open window fluttered ripples of glorious breeze, and from sounds of water splashing crisp against bows of ships I knew I was on the shore of some great inland sea—probably Lake Superior (the laden boats were being poled into the heart of the city, as the muddy tide curled along the canal outside). Each wavelet overflowed with life into my ear, and the sunlight was no less eloquent.

"Hullo, doctor!" I turned to a bulky figure by the bed; "can you tell me where this is?"

"Why, yes!" he answered—and *terra firma* radiated from that voice—"the same old Tsukiji, don't you see? you're getting on first-rate!"

"I know," I said, "but what's this on my hands?"

"Oh, that's all right, that's smallpox; that'll soon be gone!"

I gave no heed to the import of his words, the sound was so superb. It was a positive world of flesh and blood, a universe of sanity and health. Each moment made the picture more assured, as chairs and table, *tatami* (the rice-straw mats) and stove, appeared in

their familiar pose: but then—the forest . . . and the noiseless dwarfs? . . . the wonder faded as I dropped down plumb in a cloud of softest soundest sleep.

Next time I awoke it was a world of very dreary prose. Rain was sopping on the ground outside the open window, and the room was dull vacuity. Trying to rise, I found my body like a mould of pulp without a shred of fibre holding it together. A Japanese girl slid quickly to my side, and in the gentlest tones saluted me, "*Ohayo; o medeto gozaimasu!*" ("Good morning; I congratulate you!") After a long gaze at this strange though familiar apparition, I came back to Japan, but with reluctant acquiescence. "*Nan-ji deska?*" ("What's the time?") I asked—and her face beamed at having a rational being instead of a devil to deal with. She took down my watch, and held it before my face: the tick of the second hand seemed most remarkable, so brisk and orderly, so different from anything of late. I put my head under the clothes, and lay still for an hour or two. As the day wore on she brought me a spoonful of liquid (ammonia was in it), which swept like a cleansing tide through every cranny. Then for the first time it occurred to me I had been ill, and I should like to know how long. I could not think of this in Japanese, so I begged her, "*Jibiki wo dozo*" ("Please get a dictionary"), and when the book arrived I floundered long before I built up my inquiry. At last I found that this was the eleventh day, and that for eleven days I had had no other food than soda-water. Nine days and nights of unrelaxing strain, peering incessantly through the gloom for some signal of Escape, and raging hard at work for every strung-up second of that time with a desperation no sane man can realize: a Charge of the Light Brigade for days on end without a breathing-space—until the Forest came.

When fever is high the patient is lifted out of the ordinary medium of common sense, and the brain then "races" uncontrolled, performing in five minutes as many thousand revolutions of thought as would require the whole of a healthy day. No wonder legs and arms were like famine skeletons of Bombay. . . . It would never do to think, for thought might bring Feeling, and that would be fatal. The rigid windows of the room, the buildings staring in outside, and voices calling to and fro in different languages—they forced themselves against the brain like some huge examination-paper. Down under the sheets, and shut out their relentless bombardment of an unbefriended aching nebula!

At last one morning—it was only next day—a spirit seemed to stir upon the face of the waters. A girl came to my side with a glass of hot milk, real earthly dairy milk, and from its fragrant steam arose a landscape of cattle on a thousand hills, cowslip scents of long ago, and memories of healthy cock-crow heard at dawn in schoolboy days. It seemed incredible that such delights were possible, as I toyed with the teaspoon, and sipped now and then ecstatic draughts of a drop or two. After ten minutes of this luxury I yielded up the glass, and fell asleep again.

That afternoon walked in a well-known figure, the American Bishop of Tokyo, with genial voice and twinkling humorous eye. He filled the room with laughter as he chaffed the Japanese nurses on their treatment, and they in turn—*more Japonico*—plied him with questions on every conceivable subject, pleased with the chance of meeting a distinguished foreigner who could talk as one of themselves. When he had gone away, promising to return to-morrow, the girls proceeded to expound his sayings, syllable by syllable, with the help of many a feminine "*né?*" ("You know?") and with bursts of delight if

they detected gleams of apprehension on the part of their patient. Whatever might have been going on in Heaven that night, there was great joy in the hearts of two Japanese girls, nurses by profession, but women first and last.

Next day we woke early, and spent two happy hours contemplating the fact that hot milk would be due at 7 a.m. Having sipped it down to the uttermost drop, nothing else was worth considering in comparison, and the hours went by in a colorless neutrality. At intervals they painted my face with borax and glycerine (for nothing was hid from the dictionary), a delicious operation performed with a touch of thistledown, and with a minute care befitting an Ivory miniature.

On the fourteenth day we had a visit from an English clergyman, who lived three miles away at Shiba. He suggested letting my relations hear that I had been ill and was doing well; and until that moment the thought of "friends" or "relations" had never once arisen—for the afterglow of the Forest still held sway. When the doctor looked in to say good night he announced he would not be coming to-morrow, as he was suffering from a sharp attack of rheumatism (caught in my service). Next day, accordingly, being thrown on our own resources, one of the girls conceived the brilliant idea of *bifu-ti* as an extra diversion. This was successful beyond expectation, so much so that the patient himself, who had hitherto shown little initiative, suddenly ordered "*yaki-pan*" ("toast"), and had sense enough to add "*abura nashi ni*" ("without butter"). The day was thus one shameless bout of gluttony, with a Demand-curve soaring to the skies; and when the setting sun flushed the walls of the room with color the glutton took no heed of it, though not so many nights before he had worshipped at its shrine.

The doctor's illness proved to be seri-



ous, and for the next ten days we saw nothing of him. But reconstruction went on rapidly, and high jinks of a sort prevailed; for though the commissariat was limited to the supply of milk, beef-tea, and toast, nothing was laid down as to quantity, and a mean advantage was taken of this omission. It is the convalescent who appreciates the old saying, "They that be for us are more than they which be against us!" He has only to lie still, and the majority increases every hour, an unearned increment of life. While I composed the centrepiece my nurses, sitting on the floor one on each side of the bed, began a course of lessons in English, varied in turn by instruction of their patient in the *nuances* of the Japanese tongue. We soon achieved a telegraphic fluency in both the languages, with infinite laughter on their part. Myriads of inquiries were made about the inhabitants of my honorable country—not, strange to say, about the men, but entirely concerning the women: how could they bear the pain of such squeezed waists and pointed toes? and the babies, were they not frightened when their mothers spoke so loud? As to their wonderful dress, what a time it must take to put on and off so many kinds of garment! and how they must shiver at a winter evening party! I assured them no man, even though he spoke Japanese perfectly, would ever be able to satisfy them on these inscrutable affairs. Then they were anxious to know why Japanese women had such a baby "bridge" to the nose, while the women of the West carried that organ in such high commanding fashion. I told them they must eat more meat and less of rice, and they nodded quick with a fervent "*naruhodo*" ("just so!") of assent. Thus we passed the rather weary hours; for the patient, though he enjoyed his food, could not yet walk or even stand for more than a second or two. But the Bishop looked

in every day, sending winged words through the open window, and—never to be forgotten boon—leaving behind him a copy of the "Mail."

The twentieth day was a memorable one: there arrived by post the "Daily Graphic" of 31st December 1896, with its summary of the events of the year. From early morning until sunset I devoured this thrilling narrative over and over again, till I could hardly stay in bed for excitement. The broadside of terrestrial news set me all on fire from stem to stern. "*Tasshá de gozaimasu, né?*" ("Isn't he strong?") said the nurses many times, as they watched the reading hour upon hour; but their faces fell when they took the temperature next day, and found it down near danger point. They brought me, to beguile the time, a beautiful chart of my recent journeyings, executed in colors with the fastidious accuracy so dear to the calligraphic Japanese: there I traced, with quite impersonal concern, the surges of temperature—three days close to 106°—prior to the exit from the Cave, succeeded by the instant drop into the level calm of the Forest, and presently subsiding in a Fuji slope of milk-and-water impotence.

Towards the close of one tedious afternoon, for it had been raining sleet all day, a *betto* (groom) in livery splashed up to the door and handed in, with compliments and courtly messages, a beautiful basket-structure trailing with maidenhair and bloom, his master's card attached by a white silk ribbon. The nurses, not to be outdone, charged him with a load of equally magniloquent response, conveying to his illustrious patron information as to the health of their English patient, now become more or less distinguished by reflected light. The *betto* and his empty jinrikisha went on their dripping way, while we three worshipped at this altar of flowers, whose fragrance quite transformed the bare sick-room. Then

underneath a layer of fern we found dozens of oranges, the choicest of the many varieties native to Japan; and there was no more reading of the "Mail" that night. This timely gift was from the son of Count Matsura, who had been a pupil of mine at home. His family were of old good friends to Englishmen, for in 1613 his ancestor welcomed to trade in Hirado (their island-fief near Nagasaki) the pioneers sent by the East India Company to open intercourse with Japan—an experiment of only a poor ten years' duration.

I was awake as usual in the morning, when an earthquake came about a quarter to six, which lasted 128 seconds—an alarming space of time to be fearing the worst. My night-nurse was sweeping the room, and as soon as the floor began to heave she dropped her broom and flew outside. But though the instinct of ages took her out, something else quickly brought her back, and she stood beside the bed, holding my hand, trembling in every bone of her body, as she faced the music of rattling panes and banging shutters,—till the last vibration journeyed on, and left us with a sickly smile. It was highly comforting to hear just afterwards the Ishikawajima "hooter" throbbing out across the Tokyo air, assuring us that business would go on as usual notwithstanding the recent alarm.

After breakfast came the "Mail," with something more tonic than even oranges. The Government was on the point of introducing a bill to establish Gold Standard in Japan. As this was in my own line of trade, the announcement stirred me like a call to arms. I got out of bed, and determined that now my legs must make up their mind to be mobilized. The sunshine was playing upon the floor, and I managed an entire circumnavigation of the bed—to the ardent satisfaction of two

alien women. The moral ozone derived from the erect attitude was so inspiring that the feat was repeated several times that day; and towards evening I actually sat by the blazing stove while they made a fresh bed, listening to its roar with the indifference of a baby—that rumbling terror which had scared me so three weeks before.

On the twenty-fifth day our long-lost doctor showed himself again. He had had a bad time, and looked very white, but expressed himself pleased with what had happened in his absence. The patient's skin was nearly firm, and no prospect of being seriously marked. The nurses were duly praised for their share in this result, and they responded with choice samples of their newly acquired skill in English idiom. One of the two, however, he declared to be quite worn out, and finding her temperature 104° (though laughing all the time), she was promptly muffled up and despatched in jinrikisha to her home—for the hospitals were crammed. It was nothing grave, and she was well again in a week.

And now the word was given that the prisoner had served his time: there was no reason why he should not see the world if he chose. He was not the least inclined, eager as he had been previously to burst his bounds. He preferred to stay in bed and watch his nurse at needlework, or practise writing *kana* (Japanese phonetic syllables) under her approving eye, or help her wash away the paper which had sealed the doors leading into the other half of the little bungalow. (The paint on one of those doors, by the way, was sadly dented here and there, as by repeated blows from some iron instrument.) Meanwhile our doctor had notified the gray-haired police sergeant who watched over the white community of Tsukiji that we were ready to receive his visit of ocular inspection, after which, in conformity with law,

he would issue his certificate of liberty to roam at large. That evening came a letter from the advanced class of students at the university, full of congratulation on the favorable news which had reached their ears; "and yet," said the sympathetic writer, "we have all much fear that now in so weak state, and exceedingly alone in strange land many thousand mile from native country, you shall earnestly desire to leave Japan, for wish to see again your family. I, at least," he concluded, "shall be of such a mind if placed in a likely spot" (similarly situated). I sent him back a hasty note to assure him I should not feel lonely in a land of such kind letters.

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And so the astonishing days went by. The equinox had passed—the light grows longer gently in Japan—and the air began to be filled insensibly with soft stirrings of glorious things to come. What man would attempt to describe, to one who had never seen our earth, the advent of even an English spring, where the sun rides low above the fields, where lustre and radiance and vivid warmth are at best but half revealed? Then who that has seen and heard and felt the Spring in Japan unfold, will degrade the memory by trying to put it into words? A convalescent at least, born in pale northern latitudes, turned out on his tottering legs in Japan at such a time, is only too glad to be still while this great orchestra of life awakes. He is almost overcome by the ordeal of renewed relations with such an eloquent External World, which from every point of the compass marches up in inexhaustible procession, bidding him welcome back again. The pageant there arrayed before each sense is too superb for a weakened soul to face; the far-travelled body is quite content to drift for hours along the sheltered paths between the time-worn trees of Uyeno park, beneath

a white-cloud firmament of pink-flushed cherry bloom, where the slumbering babies nod like harebells on the backs of their sisters at play in the luminous shade. Stretched far and wide below our lookout ridge—historic Tōyōzan—lies the great Eastern capital, quiet as some vast village of another world, an unaccentuated gray expanse of multitudinous tiled roofs, clear in an atmosphere unstreaked by smoke; across this unresounding level of crowded city life temples and tufts of foliage rise to break the sober monotone; while up here on our breezy picnic bluff the sparkling April sun—the cheery sun which has seen the Tokugawa come and go—laps in among the tall stone lanterns with its scented warmth.

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It was tropical June, and I had long returned to my quarters in the hotel. One morning a sharp crack made me sit up in bed just as dawn was spreading gold above the hills of Kadzusa. As I lay back again while the *diminendo* of the earthquake died away, my eye was arrested by a commonplace detail overhead. The four corner standards of the bedstead were carried five or six feet up, to support a flat trellis of iron laths above my head, upon which the mosquito-net hung stretched. Joggled by the untimely shock, I recognized at once—the aerial Forest of months gone by. But how did I get there?

One scorching afternoon in mid-July I sat out on my cool verandah reading the "Daily Graphic," the deep blue bay of Yedo flecked with fishing boats in front of me, when Kin San handed me an envelope from the white-haired dispenser of Tsukiji. It contained a long-due bill for medicine supplied: I glanced along the narrative till I stopped at an entry (on the day I walked out towards the Sumida) which contributed the missing link: "Feb. 9, morphia tabloids, 40 sen." So a frac-

tion of tenpence had taken me there and back, into the shade of that Undergrowth, and out into the Light again.

We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of.

It is now five years since I paid that unpretentious bill, and many sights have met my eyes since then. I have basked at 7 a.m. under a broiling umbrella beneath the Eden loveliness of the Botanic Gardens in Saigon; I have toiled up Fuji in the silence of a full-moon August night, and watched the stupendous flush of dawn grow deepening red with expectation above the sleeping levels of the vast Pacific, till the sun rose dazzling from its golden bath to sparkle down a hundred miles of pine-fringed coast and headland reach below (is it not Mr. Hearn who says, "The first sight of [or from] Fuji at dawn is not to be forgotten in this life or the next"?); entirely alone in the Indian summer of late October I have climbed for miles through the limitless blaze of crimson maple on the waterless tracks of deserted Nyohozan to emerge on the solitary top with its immemorial shrine, and look down on a soundless world—save for the "hush" of far-off waterfalls—where the countless ranges of hills, sunny and blue, lay quiet as folded sheep; for five unruffled

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days and nights I have steamed on an Indian Ocean wrapped in opal calm, the horizon dozing two or three miles away, where encompassing stately peaks of cloud stood all day poised like guardian towers asleep, their silky detail mirrored white in the motionless depths below: these and a thousand unimagined scenes have come and gone; but the Forest has remained.

Yet the former sights were real—for tourists pay their passage-money to behold them too—while there never was such a Forest at all. (The doctor and I agree in this, though each with his own reservation as regards the sense of that remark.) The Authorities say I was never there: I was "not myself" at the time to go, nor was I "all there" if I went; besides which, how can any one be Nowhere? Yet, here in lawn-mown England, breathing a snug Laodicean air, I have only to shut my eyes: again I hear beneath the moss that microscopic ooze, the distant music of its subterranean plash, again I see the noiseless Dwarfs (they wrote to me the other day), the towering unstirred foliage overhead. "A permanent lesion!" say the Faculty, and perhaps they know no better. How charming is divine philosophy; but the Forest far excelled it in this isolated case.

*Ernest Foxwell.*

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### THE DEEP-SEA FISHERMAN.

It was the writer's good fortune to be on friendly terms with the Mission to Deep-Sea Fishermen, and to be allowed to sail on one of their boats. While doing Mission-work,—medical, religious, material—it should be understood that each boat is worked on entirely practical lines; that is to say, the

boats are genuine fishing-boats and are intended for that purpose, the men are practical North Sea fishermen, who have been bred up to the trawling business, and the proceeds of the catches cover, on an average, two-thirds of the expenses of the vessel. The men get so much weekly wage, with a percent-

age on the catch of fish. They go out with the fishing-fleets, fare as the other men, and weather it out, good and bad, in exactly the same manner as the rest of the fleet, or as the other "single-boaters." The only difference is that from time to time, intervals are taken to let the boats do the proper work of the Mission—visiting the other boats, holding services, distributing literature (for the modern fisherman reads eagerly), selling the tobacco, carrying away sick or damaged men; and that the Mission—visiting the other boats, days, and are organized on strictly temperance lines. Otherwise one might be on board an ordinary smack for all the difference to be noticed; and the talk is much the same as on other smacks. "Ship ahoy, how've you done, mate? What cheer? How are the markets?"

Perhaps it may be well to explain to the general reader a few of the ordinary terms of the fishing world. The boats, that is the trawlers, work either in fleets, under the direction of an admiral, who signals when and where to fish by flags or rockets, or else singly. The latter are known as single-boaters. These work on their own account, generally go out for a week, and bring home their catch themselves, kept in ice. These are the boats, under sail or steam, that we see all round our coasts, outside the three-mile limit, or pass anywhere on the high seas. They are mostly owned by men who have saved a little money and bought a share in a vessel, then the whole vessel, and finally several vessels. Some skippers sail their own boat, but it is not everyone who does so well as this. A few are unlucky, genuine cases of misfortune, victims of a storm, or a collision, or bodily accident. In most cases, where the fisherman has prospered, it is because he has been a steady man, as likely as not a religious and a temperate man. The fleets work in the North Sea only, or mainly, are usually

owned by companies,—the Great Northern, Gamecock, and the Red Cross—and are now all steamboats. These steamers do four times as much work as the old sailers. They work in fleets because of the carriers and the markets. A carrier,—there are six in all—visits the fleet each morning, and the fish is promptly boarded; if the vessels were scattered all the fish could never be boarded and thus got away at once to market. Every morning, rough or smooth, clear or thick, the carrier steams away with its load to market, Billingsgate or Grimsby, and the fish is sent away all over the kingdom and the Continent. The trawlers come in once a month, to fill up coal, and stay ashore twenty-four hours. In the old sailing days the boats came ashore at the end of every two months, and stayed ashore a week.

It will be gathered from this that the North Sea fishing has created a population apart, with manners and character different from anything else in the world. They are the finest men afloat, can weather anything, and bear anything. They are hardy and rough, but not so rough as they were, not such utter savages. It may honestly be said that this particular Mission has been the means of civilizing them, and of having completely transformed the fishing world in the last quarter of the century, as much by its work on land as at sea; by its highly efficient institutes at the big fishing-ports, as well as by its work afloat. It was the writer's good fortune to see the Fishermen's Institute at old Milford, among others, and nothing could be more admirable than the simple and practical manner in which the place is managed. It is for fishermen only, not for other sailors. Here the men can sleep, take their meals, and live; here are rooms for the skippers and mates, and rooms for the men and the lads, some of the latter of quite tender years, as the



landsman would think. Here they meet their mates; there is no need for shyness or shamefacedness, no need to drop into the drinking-shops, for want of other places of rest or quarters to gossip in. The men sit and smoke, gossip and play games; the boys have their select corner with bagatelle, draughts, dominos, papers, and enjoy themselves grandly. Nothing has hit the drinking ashore so much.

The old-day fisherman, heathen as he was, must have been a wonderful man, not, perhaps, necessarily a better seaman than the fisherman of to-day, though the men nowadays say so. "They were greater men, then," the skipper said to me. "How do you mean?" I asked. "Bigger?" "Yes, bigger; great big men, there are none like 'em now." I suggested that it was the same thing as at school, the new boy always thinking of his seniors as giants. "Perhaps; but I've seen them do things. They'd think nothing of a dozen hours at work, hard at it. Now if you tell one of them [pointing to the crew round him] to pull a jib-rope, he'd say it warn't one man's job, wants two to do it." But here the crew jeered at him, in huge delight. Taking it all in all, one may say that these fishermen, especially the East Coast men, are the finest men and sailors we have in England. The world at large hardly realizes what a national asset there is in this population. Anything which helps and improves the chances and *morale* of these men ought to be unhesitatingly welcomed. We lie in our beds and hear the winds howl round our chimneys; here are men whose homes are literally on the deep, who come back at long intervals to wife and child, who have an unbroken round of hard toil and exposure from one watch to another. And a landsman has much to learn from them, not in seamanship alone, but in simplicity, in manliness, in quiet piety, in cheerfulness, in readiness to work,

in natural courage. Saving life in their boats in a rough sea is nothing to them; it comes as a matter-of-course, and nothing is said of it. Such and such a man was "took off" is a common phrase. One smacksman took off three several lots of men, seventeen in all, in a couple of gales at no ordinary risk, till at last his owner told him that he had been sent out to fish, not to save life; but no one thought much about it.

The writer had heard something of these men, and had seen a little of them before, and was glad to make closer acquaintance with them. He here gives a log of various conversations with the men at different times, which may afford a little insight into the lives of these sea-going folk. A few definitions must be premised. "Gales" occur seldom, perhaps one in every two or three years; then it is a "tempest." Other storms are merely "weather," and when the ordinary man is on his back, that is a "tidy breeze," or "a good fresh wind." What the fisherman does not like is being in his "olly frock," for that means dirty weather. He thinks little of foreign fishermen; the French, perhaps, are the best of them. The Norwegian boats are, he will tell you, cast-off English boats, condemned by the Board of Trade. "They'll sail them while the planks hold, pumping all the voyage, and won't come off them, either, till the dead last moment, when you come to take them off in a storm, and then they'll all jump off sudden, in a scare, perhaps." Fish is of two kinds, "prime," that is, sole, turbot ("butt"), brill, halibut; all other is "offal." It is packed in "trunks," holding a hundred and twenty pounds or more according to the size and shape of the fish.

We spoke of the fishermen, what they are and what they were. "Twenty or thirty years back the fishermen was cannibals. That's what they was, ashore and at sea. Why, no one thought of them as other than that. You could-

n't do anything with them at all. They were a class apart then, kept to themselves, didn't care to mix with no one, didn't like to. They was ashamed of themselves, like," the mate said. "They was ashamed to come to church or chapel, or go with other folk. But now that they see the gentlemen more, it's different."

"How did your work begin?"

"Well, you see, it was this way. A gentleman heard about 'em, and went out in a smack, and stayed out a week, until the carrier took him home. The skipper warned him not, told him he didn't know what the men was like. But he would,—went and talked to the men, in a top hat, for preaching, you see. The men thought it was a joke, and some shied 'addocks at him. He was a rare plucked one, and later on bought an old boat and went out to them. Then they cleared the coopers out. [The "coper" is a Dutch grog-vessel.] They couldn't live with us; we could undersell them. The Board allows us to take 'baccy in bond, and sell it, so as we don't sell more than half a pound at a time. So the men came to us, what with the services, and the doctoring. But it's strange, directly we've gone, the coopers seem to get wind of it and come out to the boats. They can't sell liquor, though, now at sea, and the gun-boats of any nation can capture them if they're found doing so. Smuggling? Yes, lot of it on board the smacks, but not to sell, only for their own friends at home. Scents, and spirits, too, and 'baccy—every day it's done. Sometimes they catch a boat, and make a great to-do over it, but bless you, it's going on all the while. The men are glad enough to see us back, too. They'll come aboard, for 'baccy or a yarn, and say, "Why, we thought you was never coming again." When it's too calm to fish, they'll come for a bit of a service on board, or games, or we go over to them."

They told some tales of the North Sea. "It's now fourteen or fifteen years back since the Hull fleet was lost, near two hundred men, between the Dogger and Well Bank. That's a dangerous place. The sea's like a wall on the Bank, with a narrow channel between. Two fleets had got mixed up and were all in among each other. There was a fresh breeze from the south, then it suddenly went round nor'west and came a gale. One man only had the sense to sheer out when he saw the glass falling; all the rest was caught together. The Board of Trade after that ruled that they shouldn't fish on the Bank for three months in the winter, but they fish all the same.

"We find some rum things, too. A body once, with a fine set of teeth; I could ha' done with them. He was a foreigner. The body was all decayed, but the boots was quite good. When we were hauling the net, we see'd something and couldn't make it out. My brother, he says to me: 'What's that? a pair of boots, or fish?' It turned out a body. And those other coves wouldn't take the legs to leeward, when we lifted him, so I had to, all alone. I tied a cloth over my mouth, but whew! At breakfast we had fish, but it tasted all dry and gritty. 'I can't eat this,' I said, and put the plate down. Then the other men all put their plates down; none of them had any breakfast that morning.

"But it's a hard life, a fisherman's. Gentlemen see nothing of it, only in the summer when it's nice and fine. We took a gentleman out for a week, calm all the time. 'I don't see anything hard in a fisherman's life,' he said. Well, we took him out the next week,—blew the whole time. He was as ill as could be, downright bad, wanted to go back, but we wouldn't have it, made him stay out the week. *He's* never been out again. Another gentleman we took,—would board a Lowestoft boat, though

it looked foggy. The skipper warned him not to, but he would go. We never saw *him* again. We went back for him the next day, he wasn't ashore. He had a pretty rough time,—had to stay the week on a dirty boat, full of vermin, and lie on coils of ropes. Still, he was a good 'un. Once we had an Irishman and a friend of his out with us. It was blowing fresh, and we said he'd better wait till the wind went down a bit. No, he would go. 'Och, now, ye're afraid, we'll sail at once.' He was properly ill, I can tell you. 'Shure, o'll die, shure o' will. Take me back, skipper, 'tis no place for me at all.' And *he* never comed again. His friend said nothin', but he was fair ill, too. Then one gentleman we took would go to see the lightship, wanted to see how the lights worked. We told him he wouldn't like it; 'twould be fair greasy up there, and he'd be ill. No, he wouldn't have it, he would go. Sure enough, when he went up, he was sick, and the man had the lamp all spread out, and couldn't let him out. We had to carry him down, and take him ashore, and he was ill for days after.

"It's a hard life, take it as you will. You'll never meet a fisherman who wouldn't remain on shore if he could."

"Ay," said the mate, "that's so. I've been on deck from twelve to twelve, and never had time to go down, working hard all the time,—save of course to swallow a mouthful of tea."

"Yes," said the skipper, "it's haul, haul, haul the whole time. Your hands get that cold, you can't feel 'em, and you can't wear mits 'cause of the fish. That's the cruellest thing of all. It'll freeze and snow for days and days, and the ice will form thick on the deck and the ropes and the sails, not slush, but regular ice, till you have to knock it off in blocks with handspikes. And all the time you've got to be working at that blessed net. One night the mate yonder was turning in, after his watch, took

his boots off, when up he has to come; net had caught or something. Went down again, got one boot off, when up he's fetched again. Next time he didn't take his boots off at all, but turned in boots and all and was settling down to sleep, when he's called out a third time, and when that was over, it was his watch. Then when your hands get warm again, ah, it's then you feel it. Why, I've cried for pain. I've seen big men go right unconscious when they've come into the warm,—yes, from the pain. The worst is, your hands get so hard, they crack, and you can't do nothin' for that. O' course they get all right again ashore. There's the sea-bolls, too,—oh, it's properly hard, I tell you. But the worst job of all is standing at the wheel in the cold nights. It's cruel. The cruiser and cutter chaps come aboard, and won't believe us when we tell them that our watches are eight hours?"

"How long are theirs?"

"Four, and relieved every hour at the wheel. We'll be sometimes the whole time at the wheel, till you're perished with cold. D' you remember that night, Charley, in '95 I think it was, when it was snowing four or five days? I was at the wheel eight blessed hours, and longer. 'Here, take it, one of you chaps,' I said, 'or I'll chuck it.'"

"Yes," said the steward [cook]. "We had nothin' to eat that time; all the food was fair eaten up. We had taken enough for eight weeks, and 'twas some days over. That was a proper time. One vessel had to ball and pump for twenty-four hours, till they was tired out. They had had nothing to eat and drink, all ate up, and was sitting in the cabin, up to their knees in wet, no coal left, no fire. Then they chucked it up. The skipper was a decent God-fearing chap. 'We've done all we can do,' he says; 'now we've got to get ready for the end.'"

"What became of them?"

"Oh, they was took off by a boat from another smack."

"There's little rest, too. The steam trawlers, they go out for a month, then home for twenty-four hours; that's all the holiday they get; at the end of the second or third trip, maybe a few days more. It's all steam now; there's many of the herring-boats building as steamers. But they don't need such seamanship as they used to; not in boarding the fish, either. In the old days we used to have to board anywhere, any time. Often your vessel would be a long way off before you could fetch her again. Now they can steam close down to the carrier, drop the boat to leeward, then steam down aft of the carrier, and pick her up again; it isn't half as dangerous. But the life on the modern ships isn't near as healthy. The engines take up so much room 'midships, and the cabin's hard by, and gets that hot in the summer,—why, I've seen the men coming up to their watch *wet*: you can't stay under, sometimes. But the sailing-vessels can't live with them. We should starve with them, and they would starve with us. Where they are, they catch four times what we catch; if they fished here, it wouldn't pay them to keep catching their net, and hauling. They wouldn't pay their way."

"How do they live in the steamers?"

"Oh, well enough. The stewards manage middling fair."

"And in the old days?"

Here the crew yelled in chorus. "Oh, lor, there used to be a stew, some stuff or other; the men used to say it was six months old, and you got things out of it, you didn't know what,—chunks of hard stuff. But they do middling well now."

"You have to work harder for your fish, too, nowadays; the money doesn't come so easy as it used to. And it's uncertain work, just heartbreaking at times. I've known a boat come in with

a tidy load of fish and clear a heap of money, forty pounds it may be, and you'll come in an hour after and not make ten pounds for the same lot of fish. You never know before you come in what you'll make. What puzzles me is, why sometimes it don't pay them to sell the fish, but they just throw 'em away. I've seen 'em cart herrings for manure, and all the time there was heaps and heaps of poor folk wanting the fish. Can you explain that?"

I could not explain, any more than why, in a good year, plums and apples are thrown to the pigs; at least, I could not see the remedy.

"Then, again, how is it the price will change so much in an hour?"

Here, too, the oracle was dumb, and could only suggest in comparison the shortening of the price of a Derby favorite in a few seconds. The mystery of market-prices was not for us to solve.

"But there's no rest for the fisherman, or little of it."

"Not when in port?"

"No, sir. There's the fish to land, the gear to clean and tidy, ice to get in. Sundays and all, there's very few don't fish all the week round. The West Coast boats, from Brixham and Dartmouth and elsewhere, used to lie up on Sundays. But they can't now; the competition drives 'em to it. Single-boaters, I mean; in the fleets they're always working. Of course, *we* don't fish on Sundays."

"What do you do, then?"

"Go on board the other vessels, visit, have services."

I asked whether it was true that catches were decreasing from the banks being over-fished. The skipper, with all his experience, could hardly say. "I don't rightly know. There's a deal more fish taken, but then there's a great many more fishing. A steamer will take treble as much as a sailing-vessel. They fish now all

weathers, too, calm as well as with a wind. They take more fish, but they have to work harder for them, and oftener, and go farther afield. And the Dutchmen and Germans don't observe the three-mile limit, either. They work close in, and take anything, small plaice, no larger than your hand. We chuck these over again, but of course half of them are dead then. And you can't have a close season neither, I don't think. What would the nation do if there were no fish? They did have an enquiry once, and asked an admiral, old—. He said, the only thing he could see, would be to get vessels, a dozen of them or more, with a well full of salt water, and fill these with the small fry, then let them through on other banks. But you would want a number of boats, and it would cost. It all came to nothing."

"Ay," said the mate, an excellent fellow, "it's rum work. You never know what you'll get. Once we hauled after three hours, and took a cod and a ray! I had to empty the pocket, being mate, and turned out this blessed cod. We were *that* sick! Another time I've known us take ten pounds' worth at a haul. It's just this that you feel; you've hauled and hauled on a winter night, so cruel cold that you couldn't feel your hands, and then,—nothin', or mayhap a torn net."

"Them nautical men," the skipper went on, "can't make out how we fishermen find our way without chart and other things. But we've been brought up to work by compass and line and lead. We always know where we are."

"By night, or in a fog?"

"Just the same, any time. We just grease the lead and throw it over, and you'll know within a mile where you are. It's like a book to us who've been brought up to it."

"What of the West sea?"

"Ah, that's different. The lead's no use there; but it's well lit, and you generally know the land. It used to be different. In my father's time there were scarce any lights, and then the rule was, when you was near Lowestoft on a dark night, all hands on deck, and take a share, till you was in. It used to be downright dangerous work then. We had a narrow thing once, off the Dogger Bank. 'Twas a gale of wind, and a big sea came and took us fair, and nigh swamped us. We was a new boat and lived through it, but I see the same sea as took us wipe out a vessel near us. We never saw her again, nor the men; they were lost, every one of them. I've seen a smack come in over there [Yarmouth] with not a thing on her, save one mast and the boat stuck right up on top of it. I've seen another come in, swept naked, not a thing on her, mast, capstan, bulwarks, all clean gone. They towed her in."

When the ship was buoyed up in harbor, several lads, dirty as sin, came tumbling on board from other boats. One, a Brixham lad, looked to be of very tender years, and excited our compassion. He had been a year at sea. "Hard as nails," says the skipper. "It was just the same with us all, began young, and soon got used to it. I've known 'em start as early as nine year old; but that was in the old days. Some of 'em have a cruel time if the skipper's rough, get cursed at, and knocked about. But the fishermen are mostly a better lot than they was. They used to be a fighting, drinking lot, ashore and at sea. The coopers used to sell 'em drink, fiery poisonous stuff—made 'em mad. They'd heaps of money, too, forty or fifty pounds a time, and spend it in a week ashore. There was no one to care for 'em, and they hadn't anywhere to go; they was just left



alone. But we've cleared out the coopers now, and they can come to the institutes ashore. You'll see the institutes crowded at times, can't find room to get in. They meet their friends, can make 'emselves happy. It's just drawing the trade from the drink-shops. And the men save more. They say there's more money in the savings-bank at Yarmouth for the number of men than in any other place. Some of 'em never touch drink at all. We're all temperance men on board. One time, we were lying at Dartmouth, and a gentleman came down and talked to us,—had a yacht there. He seemed to take an interest in us, asked us where we were bound for. 'Have some whiskey,' he says. 'No sir,' I says, 'we're all temperance men on board.' 'Never heard of a sailor not drink,' he says; 'never knew one who didn't drink, who was any good.' 'Come on board and have a voyage with us,' I says, 'and you'll see whether we're no good.' But he wouldn't come, shook his head, said he didn't believe in sailors who didn't drink. He was an American, I'm thinking. There's plenty of men now who go to the fishing and don't take a drop of liquor with them on board."

The fishing industry has changed considerably in the last quarter of a century; in fact, it has almost been revolutionized. We are speaking of the trawling industry in particular, though the herring and mackerel fishing has changed also. The use of steam-trawlers has altered all the conditions of work, as has been already mentioned. The centres of fishing have shifted, and are now shifting, north to Grimsby (till the disastrous strike), Leith, and Aberdeen. Yarmouth, once the trawlers' headquarters, has been abandoned; the fleet of sailing-vessels is broken up, sold or lies idle, and the men have dispersed far and wide to other ports,

after a short time of idleness and distress. The place bade fair to lose its importance in the fishing world, when the sudden revival of the herring fishery on the East coast has restored it to the greatest activity. Two busy years it has seen, and thousands of Scotch girls come yearly for the work. The trawlers, however, have left it for the north, with the exception of a few single-boaters. The herring-trade is now brisker on the East coast than it ever was known; and this fishery, too, is launching out into steam. But the seamen it breeds are hardly of the class of the trawlers, who, as we have said, have to keep the sea a month at a time, and in the old days were out two months together. Even the single-boaters are rarely out for less than a week on end.

The inside of the fisherman's life is known to few. As in other trades, we take the results but trouble little about the means. This is hardly creditable to the English, whose pride is in the navy, the sea, their life-boats, their great carrying industry. Yet all round our coasts are some fifty thousand or more of the hardiest, boldest and simplest of seamen. They have been ignored in the past. We bought the fish, and did not concern ourselves with the men who caught them; fortunately, not entirely so. As we have said, in the last twenty or thirty years, the fishermen have changed, and for the better. The seas are as strong as ever, the winds as high, the dangers and accidents and hardships as many, even though the men will go so far as to tell one that "the weather isn't the same as when we was lads; there seems to be no fine weather now, more wind, perhaps less storms; seems never the same two days together." But the fisherman himself has improved, and the whole of the fishing population has certainly

improved with him. This is due partly, no doubt, to the spread of education; lads don't go to sea now till they have left school. But the writer has no doubt at all that a main cause for this improvement has been this remedial Mission, the best friend the smacksman has ever known. And it is an education to us to mingle with the men. One must fain take off his hat to many of them, and learn a lesson from them. Though the writer

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had not dreamed of recording what he saw and heard, it proved so interesting to him, so instructive, that he was impelled to put his trifling experiences on paper in the hope that others might be not less interested. He must end with a humble apology to his good sailor-friends, who talked to him so freely, for repeating what neither he nor they had expected to be remembered.

### MATTHEW ARNOLD.\*

No year since his letters were published has recalled Matthew Arnold's name so much as the present. It has at last seen the responsible Government of this country seriously undertake, or at least seriously begin, the great work of organizing national education as a single whole, the need and urgency of which he spent his official life in proclaiming. It has seen the greatest of his living poetic successors, in daring disregard of his own past pronouncements, dismiss him in a contemptuous parenthesis as a man whose main achievement in creative literature was to make himself, by painful painstaking, into a sort of pseudo-Wordsworth. And now it has seen his name receive a kind of public consecration by his admission into this classical series of English Men of Letters.

Every one who cares about Arnold will, of course, read Mr. Paul's book. And most people will be a little disappointed. It is interesting enough of course, and of course it is not dull; but with such a subject as Matthew

Arnold, who would not be interesting, and is there any subject (except, perhaps, Mr. Gladstone) on which Mr. Paul could be dull? But it is not what it ought to be, nor what it might have been. There is little or nothing of the humor which made the essays on "Men and Books" a permanent possibility of delight. There is scarcely any attempt to get behind the writer and tell us something of the man. Worst of all, though Mr. Paul has touched almost everything, he touches only to pass on, leaves each book and poem an isolated detail, and makes no serious effort to bring all together, to paint the portrait, and estimate the ultimate worth and rank of the poet, the critic, the thinker, the delightful man of the world, all of whom were, after all, only different aspects of one human being, Matthew Arnold. The result is that one reads the book with pleasure, and puts it down with disappointment. There is not enough personality in it, either of author or of subject. It is impossible not to recall other volumes in the same series, such as Mark Pattison's masterly and unforgettable presentation of Milton, which was so full of both. Every one

\* Matthew Arnold. By Herbert W. Paul. (English Men of Letters Series.) (Macmillan, 2s. net.)

remembers laying that down either in enthusiastic agreement or in passionate disagreement with the whole conception of Milton it put before us. No doubt Matthew Arnold is not a Milton, but still less, we are afraid, is Mr. Paul a Mark Pattison. He has given us a number of scattered observations on his subject, which it would be interesting enough to discuss or dispute with him across a dinner table; he has not shown us from what point of view he sees Matthew Arnold, or even convinced us that he has seen him as a whole at all. The book has its merits, as we shall see; but its defect is that those merits are so occasional and, as it were, so accidental. The final impression left by it is that of a rather hasty, rather piecemeal, rather casual piece of work.

Few will now doubt that, whatever Matthew Arnold's claims may have been as a critic, as an educational reformer, or as a theologian, it is as a poet that he will chiefly live. Theology has always devoured her own children; reformers die of their very success; and as for the critics, it is rare indeed in their case for either success or failure to reach the scale that promises immortality. There is nothing more thankless than the attempt to influence any field of public action or opinion. If you fail, you are a forgotten fool; but if you succeed you are by no means a remembered wise man. Everybody thinks as you once were alone in thinking; but everybody thanks himself and not you for the acuteness or wisdom of his thoughts; and no one can bring himself to believe that what is now the easy and obvious property of all was once the perilous and toilsome discovery of one. Fifty years hence we shall, let us hope, have an educational system of which Matthew Arnold will have been one of the founders; we shall, perhaps, judge literature in

the large, serious, widely human spirit which he, more than any one else, has taught us; we may even have a theology which, if it find nothing else to learn from him, will have learnt at least, never again to unlearn it, the central doctrine, unquestionable in itself, but sometimes very questionably developed, which lies at the root of all his theological writing—the doctrine that the books of the Bible are literature, to be read and understood with the freedom and imagination which belong to literature, and are not science, and therefore not to be read and understood with the rigidity which belongs to science. Yet we shall have forgotten him by then altogether as an educational authority and as a student of theology, and almost altogether as a critic of literature. But the poet is happier than the publicist or the critic of any kind. He makes his appeal to his generation by means of works of art, of which the greatness lies in themselves, and not in any influence they may have. Not all his imitators can injure the fame of Wordsworth, nor can the absence of imitators reduce by one inch the poetic stature of Landor. And so, whether all the world become bathed in sweetness and light, or finally surrender itself to physical science and the Philistines, no effacing finger can touch the fame of the poet of "Thyrsis" and of "Sohrab."

Mr. Paul's method of dealing with the poetry is rather too much that of the inventory. He goes through each volume as it appeared, takes the poems piece by piece, tells their story, and gives them a good or bad mark, as the case may be. "Here the third line halts badly. This, however, is almost perfect." "The Scholar Gipsy," though it specially appeals through its topography and atmosphere to Oxford men, is dear also to all lovers of poetry." "Thyrsis" is avowedly a se-

quel to 'The Scholar Gipsy,' with which it should always be read. I do not feel able to decide between their relative merits." Is there any need to ask whether this sort of thing is worth doing? The only chance for the obvious is to be immense. The great moral platitudes, for instance, are as impressive as the Sahara or a Bank Holiday crowd. But the petty obvious finds no forgiveness from any gods or men known to literature. Mr. Paul is far too clever not to know this; but he must be careful, or he will be affording his enemies, if he has any, that subtle and secret joy which he has himself so excellently described, "the priceless luxury of intellectual contempt."

He need not have travelled further than his immediate subject, whom he rather oddly still calls "Mr. Arnold," to find a more excellent way. When Matthew Arnold gave us a study of a poet, he did not waste his time in distributing blue and red pencil marks like the examiner at a school. It is true he quoted freely, and it is one of Mr. Paul's strong points that he is not afraid of the reproach of quoting what every one pretends to remember. But he used his quotations to very different purpose. It is perhaps his most permanent contribution to criticism that he turned its face away, finally we may hope, from the abstract to the concrete. Was citation ever used to greater effect than by Arnold in the "Lectures on translating Homer," or in the essay on "The Study of Poetry"? And why? Because he uses it not to test the work of art and imagination by any abstract laws formulated by the intellect, but to make his appeal boldly to that outer and inner ear which is the only judge of poetry. All forms of art demand a freedom incompatible with a written code of laws. If you make a set of rules out of the practice of Phidias or

of Michael Angelo, you will never do justice to Rodin. But that was exactly the old system of literary criticism, to be seen everywhere. The critic codified the procedure of Homer, or Virgil, or Racine, and examined the new poet to see if his procedure was according to the code. The entire merit of making the escape from this pedantry does not, of course, belong to any one man; but to no one in England does so much of it belong as to Arnold. And no one could do the work so safely; for with his scholarly training and temperament he was in little danger of falling into the mistakes which are always discrediting the cause of freedom in literature and criticism. He was better able than any one else to show us the true way of escape from the tyranny of law and tradition, because he was less likely than any one to forget that the immortals are still our masters, and that we can never have their voices too constantly in our ears. But they are not lawgivers to whom we are to go for a table of commandments, "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not"; they are prophets in whose presence we are to stand inspired or rebuked. So Matthew Arnold used them, and so used, they are a law and model for all time. The true test, whether for Rodin or for the sculptors of the Campo Santo at Genoa, is not principles derived from Michael Angelo, but Michael Angelo himself. The true test for the modern poet is Homer and Milton, not the method or practices of either. Place a work of Rodin in the Medici Chapel, and, whatever rules he may break or follow, he is felt to be a peer of Michael Angelo. Place a modern poet's best verse by the side of such lines as Arnold liked to use for the purpose—by the side, for example, of

In cradle of the rude imperious surge,  
or of

In la sua volontade è nostra pace—

and ask yourself, "can the one live in the presence of the other," "are they, not necessarily of the same stature, but of the same family?" It is the only question worth asking, and those who have the ear for those things will not be slow to find the answer. So when Keats gives us such a line as

Silent, upon a peak in Darien,

we need ask no more whether he is of kin to the immortals; that question has answered itself. And so in Matthew Arnold's case we have no need to dwell upon such things as that he caught up and transfused in his poetry more of the mind and temper of his age than any of his contemporaries, or to call attention to the noble conception of such a poem as "Sohrab," its profoundly sympathetic treatment and the admirable art it exhibits, as in the use of the Oxus as a kind of accompaniment throughout; for when we have heard such verse as

Thus Monica, and died in Italy,

or as

In these thine earth-forgetting eyelids  
keep  
The morningless and unawakening  
sleep  
Under the flowery oleanders pale,  
or still more as

For we are all, like swimmers in the  
sea,  
Poised on the top of a huge wave of  
fate,  
Which hangs uncertain to which side  
to fall,  
And whether it will heave us up to  
land,  
Or whether it will roll us out to sea,  
Back out to sea, to the deep waves of  
death,  
We know not, and no search will make  
us know;  
Only the event will teach us in its hour,

for us the central question is answered, and no memory of halting utterance, or seeming-forced inspiration, can touch our conviction that the poet is a true poet, whom not the greatest of all will disdain to have of his company.

But, fruitfully as Matthew Arnold used this method, he never stopped short at it. He went on to ask himself the ultimate significance of Wordsworth or Byron, or whoever it might be, as an intellectual and spiritual force. And here Mr. Paul makes very little attempt to follow him. Indeed, he is so far away from a real understanding of what was the very mainspring of life to Matthew Arnold that, after quoting one of the finest stanzas of "Self-Dependence," he can add:—"The verses are pretty. But, as Gibbon said of Sulpicius' letter to Cicero, such consolations never dried a single tear"—which will be true when Gibbon is as spiritually-minded as Matthew Arnold, and when no one finds strength or comfort in Marcus Aurelius. And in another place he can ask, "What had Matthew Arnold to do with Amiel?"—Amiel, who was in fact more like Arnold in attitude of mind than almost any of his contemporaries. The fact is that this book contains some excellent things, such as the justly severe criticism of Merope, and the interesting discussion of Empedocles, or, again, the account of Arnold's excursions into theology and politics. It contains a few delightful personal touches such as that, which Mr. Paul had from Arnold himself, of Barnum's saying to him, "You, Mr. Arnold, are a celebrity, I am a notoriety; we ought to be acquainted," and a few, too few, of Mr. Paul's own good things, such as "Mr. Arnold was apt to think, with the bellman in 'The Hunting of the Snark,' that what he told you three times was true," or Lord Young's comment



on the remark that Barnes, the Dorset poet, might be put on the same shelf with Burns, "It would have to be a long shelf." But the root of the matter the book does not contain. This is no place to attempt an estimate of the personality and influence of Matthew Arnold. But Mr. Paul's volume was exactly the place, and we should have liked to find in it some more serious attempt to discuss and even to define the curious position Arnold occupied. Half a Hebraist and half a Hellenist, half a Puritan and half a Humanist, the son of his father and the disciple of Goethe, the voice of Oxford, of both Oxfords, Jowett's as well as Newman's, in the half-century in which Oxford has most moved England, Arnold was the interpreter between "two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born," the man who brought "his sad lucidity of soul" to awaken the dormant spiritual intelligence of a generation of "light half-believers of their casual creeds," the man, above all, who would not live apart from the world like Wordsworth and Shelley and Tennyson, but living in the world was as resolute as they to live as a spiritual being and not as a worldling. Just on account of this double position, perhaps, no one was better able than he to give utterance to the thought and feeling of his age, but also just because of that he could not perfectly restore or heal it, because, standing between two ways as he did, he could not have Wordsworth's serenity, Shelley's confidence of conviction, Tennyson's massive and unconquerable strength. For that his creed contained too many discordant elements imperfectly fused. But, seen at its best, as in the beautiful *Monica Sonnet*, worth far more than all his controversial theology, it is among the most moving and inspiring our generation has heard. And if in this field he never attained a position

in which either himself or others could rest, in another side of his activity he knew most exactly what he wanted, and had no hesitation about the prescription he offered to his age. Here he no doubt made a clearer impression. It could only be upon the few, but nevertheless, if the higher culture of the English nation is not only saved from the threatening deluge of barbarism, but carried higher and placed on a surer foundation, it will be to him more than to any one that the credit will be due. He diagnosed the disease and prescribed the remedy. Certainly the disease is not less serious nor the remedy less needed to-day. Mr. Paul will have nothing to do with his Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace—names which Arnold certainly reiterated too often—and their corresponding state of mind. Separations of class are not realities, says Mr. Paul, like those of caste. But that is absurd, as every one can see. They are not so rigid, but they are just as real. And the defects Matthew Arnold discerned in each class have been accentuated since he wrote. Just as he was writing, the headmasters of the public schools, who held the very citadel of English education, were surrendering it to a band of athletic outlaws, and they are only just beginning to attempt its recapture, while the claims of a wide-world commerce engulf the middle class more completely every day, and the passion for football has aroused, as the police and prison authorities know, a new brutality in the populace. And education is again called upon to save us, and more and more physical science is apparently to be added to it. But those who think are turning again to Matthew Arnold and are realizing that, if and so far as education can serve us, it will not be the knowledge of the distance of the sun from the earth that will do it, any more than

the date of Blenheim, or the names of the English Queens. It can only be the education which takes hold of the entire human being, enters into his character and his life, and affords him

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his ideal and his consolation, and that, as Matthew Arnold knew and taught, can only be literature in its best and widest sense, the discipline of Humane Letters.

### "A PERIOD OF GREAT FUNERALS."

Mr. Edmund Gosse has undertaken the difficult and delicate task of writing the article on English Literature since the year 1879 in the new fourth volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Unfortunately he has made so much of the difficulty and of the delicacy that his article, excellent up to certain points, breaks down at later points rather disastrously. We do not forget that Mr. Gosse writes under authority. It is, indeed, clear that the editors of the *Encyclopædia* have failed to see the necessities of the case. To a history of literature, that is of ideas, in the last twenty-three years only nine pages have been allotted as against twenty-four to Architecture, thirty to Charities, and thirty-eight to Algebraical Forms.

But this is not all. It was laid down in the preface to the New Volumes that, "in accordance with the best opinion of their generation," the editors had resolved to give, consistently with careful judgment, accounts of the most recent events and the latest phases of progress. The crystallized result of this resolve was the introduction into the *Encyclopædia*, for the first time in its history, of biographies of living men and women. At the same time the editors prudently arranged that their contributors should be relieved of the invidiousness of signing such biographies. How have these principles been applied to "English Literature since 1879"? It is clear that no satisfactory account of literary effort in the last twenty-three years can be written without handling

of living names. Literature is a personal thing, however governed by broad human tendencies. By the irony of his task Mr. Gosse has had to point out that the most distinctive note in the literature of his allotted period has been the absence of tendencies and cohesion, the short life of small schools, and, in a word, the rampancy of the untethered writer. So that, unless he was prepared to say that the most prominent individual poets, novelists, and essayists of the last twenty-three years seemed to him unworthy of mention in a professed summary of those years, he was peculiarly bound to handle the work of individuals—a course which might or might not have involved the suppression of his signature. But this is precisely what Mr. Gosse has not done. He has not so much as named novelists so distinctive as Mr. Arthur Morrison, Mr. George Gissing, Mr. Joseph Conrad, Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. W. W. Jacobs, Mr. Quiller-Couch, Mr. H. G. Wells, Sidney C. Grier, John Oliver Hobbes, Lucas Malet, and a dozen others in whose work are found at least lines of honest effort characteristic of the age. All these novelists are hidden under the phrase "a multiplicity of talent and many encouraging signs of the general vivacity of fiction," where the words "encouraging" and "vivacity" are clearly intended to correct each other and convey a sense of Mr. Gosse's lofty indifference to the best fictional endeavor of to-day.

It is his right to be lofty and indifferent that one disputes. An account of English Literature since 1879, written for the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, is not a playground for snubs and preferences. Mr. Gosse's article is informing only in those parts which should be introductory to its substance; he is eloquent on the extinction of older lights of the nineteenth century, and thinks that the period he surveys "has been pre-eminently a period of great funerals." We are doubtful whether any age can be that, whether the meanest show of new beginnings has not pre-eminence over many torch-lit obsequies. But we are sure that it is the business of an *Encyclopædia* to present plain facts rather than insinuate sweeping judgments. When the writer of an account of English Literature since 1879 disdains to chronicle (as matter of history) the succession of Mr. Alfred Austin to the Laureateship is it not clear that he is on the wrong tack?

But what shall we say to Mr. Gosse's stealthy passage through the whole camp of our younger poets? The gingerly allusiveness which he substitutes for statement, to say nothing of discriminating comment, can only be conveyed by means of quotation. After a paragraph on the Parnassian School of 1880-1890, without the mention of a single name to make that term (never really established as a designation for the school of poets to which Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. Lang and Mr. Gosse himself belong) intelligible ten years hence, Mr. Gosse approaches our young poets in this tip-toe fashion:—

The death of Tennyson (October 1892) was followed by a positive "crisis" in poetry. . . . One or two writers who had struggled in vain to win attention to their poetry suddenly found it widely welcomed. The years from 1893 to 1895 saw the arrival of a surprising number of candidates for the laurel. Of these newest poets, two or three of whom possess unquestionable touches

of genius, it may be said collectively that they aimed rather at suggesting an effect than at tollsomenly producing it. In other words, the excessive attention to form, to technical perfection, which had been carried so far by the Parnassians, failed to please, and broader modes of expression were aimed at. Into this entered what has been called the "Celtic" spirit, by which music rather than painting, the ear rather than the eye, is appealed to. Here again, as so often in English poetical history, some distant analogy with French fashions was to be perceived, and several of the youngest and more promising British poets might be welcomed as brothers by the Symbolists across the Channel.

Will it be believed that in an *Encyclopædia Britannica* article on "English Literature since 1879" this is the total hint given of poets like Mr. William Watson, Mr. Robert Bridges, Mr. Francis Thompson, Mr. W. B. Yeats, Mr. A. E. Housman, Mr. Arthur Symonds, Mrs. Meynell, and a dozen, say half-a-dozen, others, who, whatever their ultimate merit, are sincere and distinctive poets and the makers of the highest form of "English Literature since 1879"? Let us hasten to add that Mr. Gosse's article and signature are followed by a list of "some others among the best known writers of the period" in which these omitted names will be found with the titles of one or two books appended to each. This small-type inorganic list, filling a column and a half, seems to be intended as a bacon-saving postscript to an article filling sixteen and a half columns, but it fails of this as of any other mission.

From the incompleteness of Mr. Gosse's survey it is a relief to turn to some of its best generalizations. To such a one, for instance, as that in which he considers with regret and bewilderment the welter of to-day's novels. We have already contended that there are names and accomplishments in recent fiction of which Mr. Gosse ought to have taken sympathetic and

indeed diligent notice. But his omission to do so leaves us much in agreement with the following passage:—

When we proceed to examine this vast productivity rather more closely we are at once struck by one conspicuous characteristic. The recent history of the novel has no continuity; its succession is without method or development. It is true that the tendency of literature can only be observed with difficulty within the narrow limits of two decades; still, even within that period it ought to be possible to trace some significance in a phase of activity represented by considerably over 20,000 separate works. The curious analyst, however, will only be baffled if he seeks for a guiding thread running through the prose fiction that lies between the death of George Eliot and the opening of the 20th century. Not only is there no animating spirit in its production, but it is even shaken by every false wind of transient and passionate caprice. Fashion follows fashion without reason or excuse, for the gusts of taste and distaste that convulse the modern novel have scarcely any relation even to the passing fashions that affect society; they are manufactured for the moment in the offices of commercialism, and pass at once into exhaustion. We are thus confronted with the really regrettable fact that this form of representative and pictorial literature, which of all others ought to preserve the characteristics of the time, and hand on the natural lineaments of contemporary people to the remembrance of their children, has largely ceased to represent or depict anything of importance in British national life and character. Observation and consistency, its saving graces, are no longer preserved in any just proportion to the multiplicity of its energies. The novel of commerce has neither morality nor tendency: in the sifting fire of criticism it falls into ashes.

If we seek to find reasons for this, we can perhaps trace them in two principal defects of modern workmanship, the one subjective, the other affecting the author from without. The subjective defect is due to the extraordinary audacity with which the modern novelist plunges into the exercise of his

craft. The great works of fiction had hitherto been produced by graduates in the university of life: men who had experienced and felt the various and poignant emotions of sorrow and aspiration; empirical judges fortified with culture. But nowadays a young man has no sooner concluded a desultory education, broken by every siren-charm of the river and cricket-field, than he is ready to attack the problems of life in the pages of a novel. Easy young spirits, with no leisure to look life in the face, scribbling against time in an atmosphere of sheltered ignorance,—what can these amateurs know of life or of their fellow-men? The result of their home-keeping energy is unfortunately harmful both to themselves and their "public"; for while the writer labors for his thirty or forty years in depicting conditions that never existed, the reader carries away from his yearly volumes an equally false ideal of life that clouds his own perception, and leaves him, at threescore years and ten, with the judgment of a child.

This seems to us to be generally sound; there is in it a reflection of the age, an echo of what thinking men feel and say about novels in this period of unprecedented production of them, which is valuable. At the same time it is too grudging. The "characteristics of the time" and the "natural lineaments of contemporary people" may have found no embracive novelist, but they are not to seek in the works of writers like Mr. Zangwill, Mr. Gissing, Mr. Wells, Mr. Percy White, Mr. George Moore, or Mr. C. F. Keary. Posterity may neglect all these writers, but why give posterity the cue? Mr. Gosse pays a just tribute to Mr. Meredith when he says that his work was the unquestioned glory of English fiction during the last forty years of Queen Victoria's reign, adding: "Mr. Meredith preserved the traditions of English fiction untarnished during one of its most prolific and most perilous periods. The preservation of the moral idea in fiction—an idea standing as a backbone to the

work, and itself sustained by the outer action of the characters displayed—the preservation of this essential tradition is largely due to his loyal and unswerving devotion to the canons of literature." Mr. Hardy is inadequately mentioned as "the master of modern English realism, in his stories of pastoral life in Wessex" (that is all). And then we read of Stevenson that he was a "pure romancist of an even purer style, the lineal descendant of Scott, touched with modernity and moved by more picturesque exotic interests than Scott ever knew," a description which strikes us as very uncritical. To describe Stevenson as a lineal descendant of Scott would be too headlong even if the latter part of the sentence did not seem to mean that Stevenson had bettered Scott. He was "touched with modernity"—being more modern; and was "moved by more picturesque exotic interests"—being born in an age when such interests and the appetite for them were commoner! But it seems hopeless to look for a convincing judgment on Stevenson. We are glad, however, that while pushing Stevenson into the arms of Scott, Mr. Gosse acknowledges that the essay was the field in which R. L. S. "excelled before he was led away by the temptations of success to an almost exclusive cultivation of prose romance." We should have been still more pleased had he suggested that Stevenson's undisputed dominion will be the *Sentimental Journey*.

In winding up his article Mr. Gosse points out that "the Romantic movement, in its different aspects, has entertained Europe for a century and more with little radical alteration." That is so, though we do not see how the fact is illuminated by the next sentence: "Between the various great poets of the Victorian age, for instance, no such difference is found as distinguished Herrick from Pope, or Goldsmith from

The Academy.

Shelley." It would be strange if it were so, seeing that Herrick and Pope (likewise Goldsmith and Shelley) belonged to two entirely distinct epochs, the difference between which was as positive as that between pack-horse and motor-car. "It is quite possible," adds Mr. Gosse, "one may go further and say it is not improbable, that the reduction of energy in literary creation of the first order, which we cannot prevent ourselves from recognizing as a feature of to-day, will be followed by a still more marked exhaustion and fatigue before the whole Romantic movement, having had its century, is swept away to make room for some wholly different mode of literary expression." With the diapausal sapience of this remark one can have no quarrel. Follows the complaint: "It is not the large 'returns,' the reverberating and unprecedented 'sales,' which proclaim the author whose happiness it will be to live in the history of his country's literature." Yet we fancy that the days have flown when an epoch-making work could go unrecognized, and that the next masterpiece may come with just that reverberation which is often the accompaniment, but never the proof, of worthlessness—even as it came to Byron, to Scott and to Dickens. When Mr. Gosse adds that "good and careful writing is at this moment little approved of, and the conquering masses march gaily over it and leave it bleeding," he is mourning with Hebraic picturesqueness something quite different from the public indifference to true literature. The very literature for which Mr. Gosse waits and watches will probably not be hailed for its "good and careful writing." The conquered (not conquering) masses will march over its style with heedless feet, but they will receive its matter like young lions who have lacked and suffered hunger.



## THE IMPRIMERIE NATIONALE.

The forthcoming demolition of this historic institution in the Rue Vielledu-Temple, Paris, ought not to pass unnoticed in an English literary journal. We have nothing of the same kind in London, though possibly the Clarendon Press at Oxford comes nearest to it, in some few respects. The history of the Imprimerie Nationale is long and interesting. It was founded by François I., who appointed Conrad Néobar the official printer of books in Greek; in 1539 Robert Estienne became the king's printer of Latin and Hebrew. They were, perhaps, rather printers to the king as distinguished from the heads of a royal printing establishment. Louis XIII. introduced a printing office into the Louvre, and it is to him, perhaps, rather than to François I., that the French national printing establishment is due. During the Revolution the word "Royale" was changed into "République," and the business was transferred first to the Hôtel Beaujon, then to the Hôtel Penthièvre, and then in 1808 to the present building, which was erected in 1712 by Armand Gaston, Cardinal de Rohan, Bishop of Strasbourg, who achieved a second distinction in becoming a member of the Académie Française without having published anything. Later on another cardinal of the same family, Louis René, Prince de Rohan-Guéméné, resided here, and it was this unscrupulous scoundrel who forged the signature of the queen, and thus started the affair of the diamond necklace. For many reasons the disappearance of the national printing house will not be regretted, above all from its insanitary state: it has become almost a plague-spot, not only to those who work in it (some 1,500 in number), but also to

those who live in the immediate quarter. The old building is to be pulled down, the space which it occupies will be sold for the benefit of the city at large, and the new printing offices will be at Grenelle.

The literary associations of the Hôtel de Rohan would fill a large volume. As a printing establishment it has been described by a Frenchman as the first in the world, although by "monde" a Frenchman should be interpreted as meaning France. It claims to contain founts of at least 158 different Oriental languages or dialects. When Pope Pius VII. visited the printing office the Lord's Prayer was printed and presented to him in 150 languages, a truly wonderful achievement at that time; but in 1891 an English firm of printers, Messrs Gilbert & Rivington, produced a volume with the Lord's Prayer in 300 languages. The typographical curiosities in the building are naturally of a very varied and interesting nature; selections have been frequently lent for public exhibition, as at the great show of two years ago. One of the most interesting is the set of matrices of Greek characters, known as the "Grec du Roi," engraved by order of François I., and "so perfect in form that the University of Cambridge applied for a fount of them in 1692."

The Imprimerie Nationale has during the last 260 years produced some of the most splendid monuments of typography since the introduction of printing. Its two editions of the "Imitation de Jésus Christ" are triumphs: with the beautiful folio of 1640, produced under the patronage of Cardinal Richelieu, the Imprimerie Royale proper made an excellent start; but

this was improved upon in 1855, when the *Imprimerie Imperiale* produced an edition to celebrate the great exhibition of that year. Magnificently printed, with elaborate borders and initial letters exquisitely illuminated in gold and colors, it remains one of the most perfect books of the last half-century. Only 103 copies were printed, at a cost, it is said, of 1,500,000 francs or about £582 10s. per copy. At one time it sold readily at £100 and upwards, but its value to-day in England is not much more than a twelfth of that amount.

Following the earlier edition of the "Imitation" came the equally beautiful edition of Virgil, 1641, in folio, sought after as a specimen of typography; Horace, Juvenal, Persius, and Terence were issued from the same press, and have also dropped in commercial value—"ils étaient beaucoup plus chers autrefois," laments Brunet. Two editions of the Latin Bible were produced: one in eight volumes, folio, in 1642, and the other in two volumes, quarto, in 1653. The edition in thirty-seven volumes, folio, of

The Athenæum.

the "*Conciliorum Omnium Generalium et Provincialium Collectio Regia*" appeared in 1644; and an edition of the "*Metamorphoses*" of Ovid, with illustrations by Le Clerc, F. Chauveau, and J. Le Pautre, in 1676. These are a few of the more important books issued during the first half-century of the existence of the *Imprimerie Nationale* as a Government institution. Under the Revolution it published the "*Collection Générale des Lois, Proclamations, Instructions et autres Actes du Pouvoir Exécutif*," in eighteen volumes, quarto, and generally known in France as the "*Collection du Louvre*."

Its more recent books include "*Le Livre des Rois*"; the "*Bhagavata*"; "*Les Monuments de Ninive*"; the "*Commentaires de César*," produced on the occasion of the Exposition of 1867; the Mollère to signalize that of 1878; Michelet's "*Histoire de la Révolution*," for the Exhibition of eleven years later; the "*Corpus Inscriptionum Semiticarum*"; and last, but by no means least, the sumptuous "*Histoire de l'Imprimerie en France*."

W. Roberts.

## BOOKS AND AUTHORS.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward is going to lecture in Glasgow next January.

It is announced that General De Wet has nearly finished his book on the Boer War. Generals Botha and Delarey will furnish a preface for it.

With reference to the mention of his name which is made in Mr. Leslie Stephen's "*George Eliot*," Mr. Frederic Harrison says that although he sug-

gested the legal scheme in "*Felix Holt*" he had absolutely nothing else to do with the book, and never discussed with the writer the characters or the plot.

"The Speaker" in its notice of Mr. Bernard Capes's book "*The Mill of Silence*" congratulates him on having "not altogether forgotten the ambitious ideals that were evident in his earlier works" and adds that his style "has

gained in firmness and reality." This is rather amusing, in view of the fact that the book in question really is one of Mr. Capes's earlier stories, which has been republished without his consent and against his vehement protest.

"The Concise Standard Dictionary" is the latest and one of the most serviceable forms given to the monumental and invaluable dictionary which, in one form or another, ought to be in every well-furnished library and within the reach of all intelligent writers and readers. This is a compact and clearly-printed book of less than five hundred pages, which gives the orthography, pronunciation and meaning of about 28,000 words. For quick reference and convenient use there could scarcely be anything better. The Funk & Wagnalls Co.

American journalists can scarcely fail to envy their Danish brethren when they learn that a daily paper in Copenhagen stopped publication from June to September this year to enable its staff to enjoy a long summer holiday. The proceeding so commended itself to Mr. Punch that he sang about it after this fashion, under the title "The Princes of Denmark":

O toilers of Fleet Street, who painfully write  
Through the lingering hours of the long  
stuffy night,  
Which throbs at each quarter as time's  
laggard flight

The echoing strokes of Big Ben mark,  
Ah, think of your brothers across the  
North Sea

As idle and cool as a mortal can be,  
And I make little doubt you will  
warmly agree

They manage things better in Den-  
mark.

The British Academy to which King Edward recently granted a charter bears an unfortunate name since it

suggests a resemblance to the French Academy which actually does not exist. Membership in the British Academy does not imply distinction in the world of letters as in the case of the French group of "Forty Immortals." The British Association is simply a society of learned men formed for the promotion of historical, philosophical and philological studies. Three of the signers to the petition asking for the charter, published last January—Lord Acton, Mr. S. R. Gardiner and the Rev. A. B. Davidson—have since died. The forty-nine distinguished men who are the first Fellows of the British Academy are as follows:—

The Earl of Rosebery, Viscount Dillon, Lord Reay, Mr Arthur Balfour, Mr. John Morley, Mr. James Bryce, Mr. Lecky, Sir William Anson, Sir Frederick Pollock, Sir Edward Maunde Thompson, Sir Henry Churchill Maxwell-Lyte, Sir Courtenay Ilbert, Sir Richard Jebb, Dr. Monro, Dr. A. W. Ward, Dr. Edward Caird, Dr. H. F. Pelham, Dr. John Rhys, Rev. George Salmon, Prof. J. B. Bury, Prof. S. H. Butcher, Prof. Ingram Bywater, Prof. E. B. Colwell, Rev. William Cunningham, Prof. Rhys Davids, Prof. Albert Dicey, Rev. Canon S. R. Driver, Prof. Robinson Ellis, Mr. Arthur John Evans, Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, Rev. Robert Flint, Mr. J. G. Frazer, Mr. Israel Gollancz, Mr. Thomas Hodgkin, Mr. S. H. Hodgson, Prof. T. E. Holland, Prof. F. W. Maitland, Prof. Alfred Marshall, Rev. J. E. B. Mayor, Dr. J. A. H. Murray, Prof. W. M. Ramsey, Rev. Canon William Sanday, Rev. W. W. Skeat, Mr. Leslie Stephen, Mr. Whitley Stokes, Rev. H. B. Swete, Rev. H. F. Tozer, Prof. Robert Yelverton Tyrrell, Prof. James Ward.

Apropos of the announcement of a new volume of essays by Mr. Austin Dobson "The Academy" recalls a long list of his previous prose writings which will surprise readers who think of Mr. Dobson chiefly as a writer of

graceful verse. No one, says "The Academy" needs to be reminded of his two volumes of *Eighteenth-Century Vignettes*, or of his recent work, *A Paladin of Philanthropy and Other Papers* (1899). It is, too, scarcely ten years since the second edition of his *Four Frenchwomen* was issued. In the field of biography he has achieved admirable things; note his *Hogarth* in the "Great Artists" series (1879), and his *Hogarth's* of 1891 and 1898; note his *Fielding* in the "English Men of Letters" series (1883), his *Bewick and his Pupils* (1884), his *Richard Steele* in the "English Worthies" series (1885), his *Goldsmith* in the "Great Writers" series (1888), and his *Horace Walpole* (1890 and 1893). That he is the author of the *Civil Service Handbook of English Literature* (1874 and 1880, and recently brought down to date by Prof. Griffin) is not, even now, at all universally known; and yet how many students have found it of great service to them. Further—apart from the works he has edited and annotated—Mr. Dobson has helped to popularize literary and pictorial art by the introductions he has penned for works by Addison, Jane Austen, Beaumarchais, Boswell, Defoe, Fielding, Gay, Goldsmith, Herrick, Hood, Prior, Charles Reade, and Steele, Bewick, Albert Durer and Holbein."

In some remarks in "Longman's" based in part upon Mr. Sidney Low's suggestion, in the article on "The Plethora of Poets" recently printed in this magazine, that music has eclipsed poetry, Mr. Andrew Lang discusses the

question why so much poetry is written nowadays and why so little of it is read. He says:

But music has always been more popular than poetry, ever since English verse and English music were divorced. Words for songs now are trash, or in foreign tongues, or are so sung that you no more hear the sense of them than you pick up the meaning of Latin prayers when chanted. Moreover, music and poetry are as antagonistic as mathematics or science and the classics. There are, indeed, "double firsts," happy people who can take pleasure both in music and poetry. Mr. Browning was one; Mr. Bridges is another. But, as a rule, poets and lovers of poetry rather hate music than otherwise, and lovers of music are indifferent to poetry. "Music is the most expensive of noises," said Theophile Gautier; Dr. Johnson could not abide it; Scott liked a "lilt," an oratorio would have sent him to sleep; and though Shelley wrote charmingly about music, he had no turn for that art. The people to whom scientific music appeals vastly exceed in number those who care for verse. They pay for seats at concerts; they grudge the same price for a book of the verse of to-day. There is no competition in their minds. They want music; poetry, of to-day, they do not want, except that of Mr. Phillips and Mr. Kipling. We pipe unto them (not that I personally pipe any longer), but they do not pay for our sweet pipings. Why not? Because, I fear, the piping is not good enough! Even if it were good, not many people care for poetry; if they do care, they have an inexhaustible body of the poetry of the past.

"Dead men outsing and outlove us."

That is truth.

## SUMMER IN THE HEBRIDES.

Half October, all September,  
 Half of August; you remember  
 What a time for you and me,  
 Sailing on the Hebrid sea;  
 Sailing on from isle to isle,  
 Threading strait and narrow kyle,  
 Spying o'er the open main  
 Severed summits link again;  
 Pleased to watch the waters sleep  
 Round Iona, green and deep;  
 Pleased to watch the waters roar,  
 Lashed on Scavaig's iron shore.

Pleasant summer scenes like these,  
 Bowers of the Hesperides,  
 On the sense return again  
 Through the fog and London rain.  
 Dearest, were it well that we,  
 Hand in hand, light-heartedly,  
 Running to a prosperous gale,  
 Round the west should ever sail?  
 Pushing our adventurous bark  
 Far from "Ronin's mountains dark;"  
 Far beyond the racing seas  
 That vex the Outer Hebrides;  
 Far beyond the frown and smile  
 Of St. Kilda's changeful isle;  
 Till on our astonished eyes  
 Strange new Hebrides arise.

J. E. M.

Chambers's Journal.

## BREVITY.

Windows in heaven, lakes in transparency;  
 Eve's waning hour, of light not all undrest;  
 The distant rivers' mimicry of rest;  
 Gleams for a moment given to the sea;  
 The passing face that snares thee innocently;  
 Unbidden tears; proud sob with pride repress;  
 Unlooked for look of Love; these bring Life zest  
 Savory with the salt of brevity.  
 Briefness of life doth life to Life endear;  
 One mortal heart for all the Gods hath room;  
 Restriction moulds and rolls the suns aright;  
 By circumspection of compacted sphere  
 Welding to orbs that kindle and illumine,  
 The beamless dust of spaces infinite.

Richard Garnett.

## SONG.

Oh! Sorrow, Sorrow, scarce I knew  
 Your name when, shaking down the  
 may  
 In sport, a little child, I grew!  
 Afraid to find you at my play.  
 I heard it ere I looked at you;  
 You sang it softly as you came  
 Bringing your little boughs of yew  
 To fling across my gayest game.

Oh! Sorrow, Sorrow, was I fair  
 That when I decked me for a bride,  
 You met me stepping down the stair  
 And led me from my lover's side?  
 Was I so dear you could not spare  
 The maid to love, the child to play,  
 But coming always unaware,  
 Must bid and beckon me away?

Oh! Sorrow, Sorrow, is my bed  
 So wide and warm that you must lie  
 Upon it; toss your weary head  
 And stir my slumber with your sigh?  
 I left my love at your behest,  
 I waved your little boughs of yew,  
 But Sorrow, Sorrow, let me rest,  
 For oh! I cannot sleep with you!

Charlotte M. Mew.

Temple Bar.

## AT THE PLAY.

As in a theatre the amused sense  
 Beholds the strange vicissitudes of  
 things,  
 Young Damon's loves, the fates of  
 clowns and kings,  
 And all the motley of the gay pre-  
 tence—  
 Beholds, and on an acme of suspense  
 Stands vibrant till the curtain falls,  
 door swings,  
 Lights gutter, and the weary murmur-  
 ings  
 Of o'er-watched varlets intimate us  
 thence:  
 Even so we gaze not on the things that  
 are,  
 Nor aught behold but what is adum-  
 brate.  
 The show is specious, and we laugh  
 and weep  
 At what is only meant spectacular;  
 And when the curtain falls, we may  
 not wait:  
 Death takes the lights, and we go home-  
 to sleep.

T. E. Brown.